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# PICTURE FRAMES

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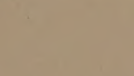

NEW YORK
ALFRED · A · KNOPF

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Published February, 1923
Pocket Book Edition November, 1927

MANUFACTURED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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PICTURE
FRAMES

# LITTLE EMMA

WHEN little Emma Hooper, from Black Plains, Iowa, came to Chicago to carve out her fortune, she did not leave behind her a sorrowing family who wondered about the fate of their dear child in the city. Neither did she sneak away from a cruel step-mother who had made life hard, unbearable. Emma's family was quite glad to see her go.

Emma's father was a member of the Knights of Pythias and worked in an overall factory. Her mother, a lazy, whiny woman, kept house, assisted unwillingly and incompetently by such daughters of the house as happened to be out of work. There were three of these daughters besides Emma and they all worked when jobs were not too difficult to get or keep. They spent their spare time trying to get married. There was one son. He was next in age to Emma, who was the second youngest. He smoked cheap cigars and hung around the livery stable and garage. His name was Ralph.

Emma came up to Chicago because she had read and heard a lot about that great city, and because she wanted to get away from Black Plains. She wanted to have a good time. There was nothing doing in Black Plains, and she knew it. She didn't belong to "the crowd," as fashionable society was called there, for she lacked both money and family. She was twenty-two and had gone

with the drummers who stayed at the Palace Hotel since she was seventeen.

Emma had been wanting to come to Chicago for a long time, but she didn't have the money. She had been graduated from grade school and finished at the Black Plains Business College. Her father liked to refer to the fact but good jobs were few in Black Plains, and Emma had not mastered the details of her profession, such as spelling and punctuation, and so she never could save much.

Emma's money came rather unexpectedly. Clarence Avery got home from college. He was the banker's son and had gone to grade school with Emma. At that time he had suffered from numerous colds in the head and was inclined to lankiness and freckles. At twenty-two he was the average small town college graduate. Clarence belonged to the local society crowd, but after several years of metropolitan living he was bored and disappointed with the gaieties of Black Plains. When he met Emma on the street one day he was agreeably surprised. Emma was small and had dark hair that curled naturally and she knew how to do it up. She and her sisters read the fashion magazines and ordered their clothes from a Chicago mail-order house. She wasn't afraid of a bit of rouge or an eyebrow pencil, either, and she had a neat little figure.

"Hello," said Clarence, "aren't you—why, you couldn't be little Emma Hooper!"

"Well, I just am," said Emma, and they stood and talked for a long time.

Then Clarence began to call and, disobeying all of the

rules of Black Plains society, he escorted Emma to the Airdrome and the movies and the most prominent ice cream parlour. This worried Avery, the banker. After he had argued with Clarence with no apparent success, he asked Emma to call at the bank. There he had made a proposition to her. If Miss Hooper would leave town, over the winter, say, a check for five hundred dollars would belong to her. It was all right, of course, he knew she was a nice girl, not a bit of harm meant or anything like that, but Clarence was young, oh, a fine boy, but young, and if Miss Hooper, now—"

So Emma had five hundred dollars. She didn't like Clarence much, anyhow. He was a silly, conceited thing, who told long tales about himself, and hadn't changed much, in fact, since his sniffy boyhood days.

The Hoopers rejoiced in Emma's luck, gave her advice about spending the money and called her a selfish thing, so she gave one hundred dollars to the girls, and then with the rest and a promise to write all about the new styles—Millie, the oldest, had nearly captured a drummer who travelled out of Kansas City—she came up to Chicago.

On the train she figured it all out. Country girls were always important in a large city. She knew that. Didn't she read about them in the magazines every day? Always "the girl from the country," sought after, betrayed. Huh! But it sounded interesting, anyway.

"For I'm rather good-looking," mused Emma, modestly, "and if some country girl has got to be betrayed, it might as well be me. I'll read the want-ads like the rest and apply for a job where they want girls fresh from the

country. I'll try to get a job with one of those nice, grey-haired old papas, who has a wife that misunderstands him, and some day he'll take me out to dinner, and, well, of course, Clarence wasn't a real conquest, that old thing, but if I can't find a nice old geezer, well, something is the matter with this girl from the country stuff, that's all."

As the train neared Chicago, a travelling man got on and sat down beside Emma. He tried to flirt with her. He asked her where she came from, and when she said Iowa, he said, "Oh, forget that stuff, kid; you haven't been out of Chi a week." She wondered why he said it, but it rather pleased her. She and her sisters had rather thought that they kept up with things, watching the fashion books and the movies, but she had been awfully afraid she would look like a rube. She resented the travelling man, though. What kind of a fish did he think she was? Why, even in Black Plains she wouldn't have flirted with a cheap thing like him. He even held one hand over his wedding ring. You couldn't put a thing like that over Emma.

At seven o'clock Emma landed in the city. The lights and noises confused her for a minute, but she liked them then—it was like a carnival. She didn't see a policeman, so she went up to a fairly respectable-looking man and asked where the Y. W. C. A. was. She knew about that and had decided to stay there until she had time to look around. The man looked at her and smiled. "Come, now, girlie, you don't want to go there," he said, "you and I'll have something to eat and then I'll show you a nice place to stay."

"Can you beat it?" said Emma, as she went on, with a toss of her head. "Do they really get away with that stuff in the city? Regular movie stuff. Can you beat it?"

She finally found the Y. W. C. A. answered a number of questions drawled out by a peevish fat woman, and was given a room.

Emma spent two weeks looking around. She visited all of the department stores and watched people. Then she took an inventory of her clothes. They looked better than she had expected. She'd spy around a bit before getting any new clothes. By putting her hat a bit more over her right ear and pulling her hair down over her forehead, she felt she could look as good as the next one.

She went to matinees and discovered restaurants and hotels and tea rooms and little things to wear. She sent home hideously-coloured postcards, saying what a fine time she was having, and sent each of the girls a waist and her mother a pocketbook. She got tired of the Y. W. C. A. and found a nice, quiet, inexpensive room on the North Side. She liked the city.

She flirted with one man in a tea room, but that was all. She didn't like that sort of thing. She was looking for the old millionaire whose wife didn't understand him and who liked little girls from the country.

Finally, she found that her money was beginning to disappear. By this time she knew the city pretty well, and so she began to look for a position in real earnest. "They all like 'em from the country," she told herself. She answered want-ads, those that asked for "young,

inexperienced girls." Maybe that was the kind the rich old men put in. They sounded that way.

Emma did not meet with much success. Usually, the place was filled when she went to apply for it. Other times, men with wearied, blank faces asked her questions —but nothing ever came of it.

For several weeks she looked for a position, somewhat carelessly at first, later with hard earnestness. Was it possible that there were no millionaires hunting for little girls, no positions even? For a week she had a job in a dirty, poorly-ventilated office, where the proprietor chewed tobacco. It was some sort of a fake insurance place. She was fired at the end of the week, but she would have quit anyhow.

She looked again. It was a tiresome job. She still had over a hundred dollars. "Not a millionaire in sight!" she sighed, as she went to bed. "These magazines are sure putting it over people."

Then she applied for positions by mail. She said she was all alone in the city, from Iowa. She had more luck. Over half of her letters were answered, but, though she was given interviews, she wasn't given a job. One man, tall, lean, sneering, looked at her for a long time.

"What made you say you were from the country?" he asked.

"I am," said Emma, "Iowa."

"Iowa. Hell!" said the man. "One look is enough to show that the White City is the nearest the country you've ever been."

The White City is a summer amusement park, but

Emma didn't even know it. But she had got a hint at the truth.

A week later she met Hallie Summers. They were both applying for the same position—"expert stenographer." Hallie was correctly tailored, perfectly groomed. Her black suit had a bit of fur at the throat, her hat was a smart rough felt, trimmed with a single wing. Her white buckskin gloves were immaculate, her shoes absolutely correct.

Emma gave her name and answered the usual questions. Hallie listened. She was next. As Emma waited for the elevator, Hallie joined her.

"What," asked Hallie, "is that gag you pulled about being from Iowa?"

Emma smiled. She liked the looks of Hallie, straight haired, correct looking.

"That," said Emma, "was the honest truth. I am from Iowa and I don't care who knows it. I don't know a soul in town but a girl I roomed with in the 'Y. W.' She wears cotton stockings and is studying to be a milliner. Why?"

"Well," said Hallie, as she led the way into the elevator, "if that's the truth or if it's a stall, you're the worst imitation of a country girl I ever saw."

"Meaning what?"

"Why, meaning, of course, my dear child, that you don't look the part. Where did you get those clothes, west side of State Street?"

"Iowa, but they are what most people up here are wearing."

Emma had on a blue and white striped silk, trimmed with a touch of green and she liked it.

"Sure," said Hallie, "that's what's the matter with them."

"I don't quite get you," said Emma.

Hallie smiled.

"You poor thing," she said, "I believe you really don't, at that. Come up to the Clover Tea and I'll buy a sandwich, though I'm not usually that kind of a philanthropist, and we'll talk it over."

Hallie ordered tea and sandwiches and the girls talked. The only girls Emma had talked to in Chicago had been cheap and slow and stupid. She liked Hallie. Hallie was old, that indefinite age around thirty, and she was wise—next to things. She knew Chicago—the way she wanted to know it. She, too, was, in a way, looking for a millionaire, though she had found one and lost him again.

The two girls talked. In five minutes they had bridged the distances more formal people would have spent years over. Emma knew all about Hallie, who wanted sixty dollars a week—and sometimes got it, and Hallie knew about Clarence and the five hundred dollars and the rich old papa who hadn't appeared.

"Now what's the matter with my looks?" asked Emma.

"It's because there isn't, in a way," said Hallie. "You look like the average stenographer, the twenty-dollar-a-week kind, that's all. Your clothes are cheap and they are almost in style. Look at all those bits of velvet and buttons."

"It said in the catalogue," said Emma, "that it was the

latest thing. I've seen several in this very pattern here."

"Sure you have. That's why you oughtn't to wear it. You may not know it, but people in cities have ideas about how country girls should look, though Heaven knows, they don't look that way. They think that country girls wear ginghams and never know that styles change. You can't wear a sunbonnet very well in the city, but if you want to get away with the country girl stuff you can wear plain things and look—sunbonnety. But rouge and made-up eyes—oh, my!"

"I'm pale without rouge, and my eyes—"

"Sure, you're pale. Let your eyes alone. How much money have you left?"

Hallie looked honest.

"A little over a hundred dollars," said Emma.

Hallie nodded. "You can just about do it for that."

"You mean?"

"Look the part—Iowa."

"Frumpy and back-to-the-farm?"

"Oh, you don't have to overdo it. All you've got to do is to look like a country girl from a city man's viewpoint. It's easy."

On the street, after lunch, Emma pointed to a girl that they passed.

"Like her?"

"Heavens, no. She's just cheap. Halsted or Clark Street. Real simplicity, I mean," said Hallie, leading the way to Michigan Avenue. "Cheap clothes are just like furniture—curliques and frills and fancy velvets and silks and things 'in style' come cheapest of all. It's simplicity that costs money. I know the shops, anyhow."

At an exclusive little shop, Hallie picked out a plain little frock. It was dark blue. A tiny white collar was around the neck. In front was a touch of silk embroidery in dull shades and a small flat black bow.

"Old men, the kind you are looking for, fall for this stuff," said Hallie. "They all came from the country—once, though they have forgotten what it looks like. Musical comedy and the magazines have done their worst. They expect frilly white aprons on the farm instead of Mother Hubbards. They want what they think is simplicity, so you may as well give it to them."

Emma bought the little frock. It cost forty-five dollars. The mail-order silk had cost fifteen.

They bought a hat next, black and floppy and not too big, with a bow on one side. It cost more than six of the stylish kind. The shoes were stout and flat heeled and the gloves were grey. The coat was plain and dark and had a wide belt and big pockets.

Hallie came over the next day and helped try things on. Emma's dark hair was parted and drawn into a plain little knot.

"That's the stuff," said Hallie. "To be a simple country girl you've got to buy the stuff on the Boul' Mich', if you're in Chicago, or Fifth Avenue, if you're in New York. I wish some one would expose this small-town stuff. Why, every town the size of a water bug has at least two stores where the buyers go to Chicago or New York twice a year. With travelling and mail-order houses—huh, it's only city people that don't know the girl from the country disappeared right after the Civil War."

"You've certainly got that straight," said Emma. "Why, Black Plains people spend all of their time trying to look as if they just came from the city. But if they could see me in Black Plains dressed like this!"

Under Hallie's directions, Emma answered a few more want-ads. She picked out important office buildings. "Go where they are if you want to catch them," said Hallie, and Emma did.

In two days she had found a job. But the owner of the firm was young and happily married and the only other man around the office was a young boy who received twenty a week. "Nothing doing," said Emma and she left.

"Be careful, the city is full of allurements and pitfalls for country girls," said the happily married man. Emma thanked him for his advice. "I wish I thought so," she said to herself as she left.

The next week she found her real job. It was what she had been looking for. She applied by mail and was told to call. She dressed in her new clothes and left off rouge and powder.

A man of about forty-five interviewed her. He was the senior partner. He looked old enough to suit Emma. "A nice papa," thought she. His younger brother was the junior partner—they sold bonds—the firm of Fraylir and Fraylir.

Emma cast down her eyes during the interview and murmured things about being all alone and wanting to succeed. She got the job. Her work was to stay in the reception-room and answer questions when people came

in. There was a little typing and stenography. The wages were twenty dollars.

"The position is an easy one, for the right girl," Frederick Fraylir had said. "Perhaps you don't know what I mean because you are new to the city. I'm glad there are still girls like you, wholesome and sane looking. Now—"

"I can start at once," murmured Emma. She thought she noticed a funny little glint in his eye but she wasn't sure. She knew she could just about live on that twenty dollars—for a while.

"Now," she told herself, "if Fraylir only works out according to specifications. Rich old man, girl from the country, wife who misunderstands—"

At first Emma didn't know that Frederick Fraylir was married, but she soon deduced the fact from conversation that she heard around the office and over the telephone. The brothers lived together in a big apartment on Lake Shore Drive and there was a Mrs. Fraylir who rang up rather frequently. The brothers called her Belle and she had a slow, drawling voice. "Hope she misunderstands him," thought Emma.

Emma liked her job, as much as she liked any kind of work. She liked Frederick and even his younger brother, Edward, though Edward was colder, more distant. Frederick was friendly, but not friendly enough, for Emma, though she sometimes caught him looking at her when the door of his office was open. The brothers had one large private office together.

In a few months she was raised to twenty-five dollars, but she knew that this wouldn't pay for a regular supply

of the new kind of simple clothes. She had actually begun to like them. She read magazines in her spare time and wondered how long it would be before Fraylir would arise to the rôle of the devilish city man. At times she was almost on the point of quitting her job—before her clothes wore out—but she always stayed on. She did her work as well as she knew how—really tried, and cast down her eyes when spoken to and acted the modest and retiring country girl.

"If they could see me act like this in Iowa," she thought, "they'd be wondering if I was copying some new movie star."

But she liked it. It was so quiet and peaceful. There were no quarrels with her sisters, no whinings of her mother, no fights between her father and Ralph, no drummers to keep in their places.

Several times Mrs. Fraylir called. She was tall and stately and dignified. "Cold as ice," thought Emma, "just the kind to misunderstand a husband." She dropped her eyes when she answered Mrs. Fraylir's questions. "No use letting her suspect I'm even human. They make trouble enough—these wives."

Then Frederick asked her out to dinner. The suddenness of the invitation almost staggered her. It had been a rainy day and the evening was disagreeably cold and damp. She was putting on her simple hat and wondering if she could buy another one soon. It was getting a bit shabby.

"Miss Hooper," he said, "may I—will you come to dinner with me? I have to return to the office and look over these new papers. It's a bit unusual, I know, but

if you don't mind, it might be a change for you. I thought—"

He actually seemed embarrassed—and he had grey hair and was getting old!

They went to a cozy, quiet restaurant. Fraylir ordered a simple, hearty meal. Emma put on her best I'm-all-alone-in-the-city manner. But pretty soon she began telling him her real impressions of the city and she was surprised to find that he seemed to enjoy them. He had a lot more sense than any other man she had ever known.

Halfway through the meal a well-dressed young couple came into the restaurant. As they passed, Fraylir spoke to them. Emma was introduced, under her real name, as Fraylir's stenographer, and at Fraylir's invitation, the couple sat down at their table. Emma didn't know things were ever done that way at all. The young couple didn't even seem surprised. Emma liked to hear them talk, so quiet and well bred and clever. Emma was careful what she said. When Fraylir smiled his approval at her, it made her quite happy. "What kind of a fish am I getting to be?" she asked herself that night, when she got home.

After that there were dinners and lunches and an occasional visit to the theatre. Emma saw several dramas; she had always limited her theatregoing to a musical comedy and vaudeville and had scoffed at high-brow stuff. She was surprised to find that she liked them and enjoyed discussing the problems they presented with Fraylir. Fraylir lent her books and she read them at night because she couldn't go around alone very well and didn't enjoy

the other men and girls she met—silly things. She and Fraylir went to the Art Museum and even to a couple of private exhibitions and to musicales and she met some interesting people. She tried to talk to Fraylir and tried to learn as much as she could from him. After all, she had missed a lot of things in Black Plains, stopping school at the eighth grade and running around with a bunch of cheap, slangy travelling men.

Winter passed. Spring came. Emma stayed at Fraylir and Fraylir's. She knew there were dozens of millionaires looking for innocent country girls, but the prospect seemed less real and alluring than in the past. She felt pretty well satisfied, somehow. She went without lunches a couple of days and managed to get some new clothes—simple things.

She met Hallie one day, Hallie with a new job and a new friend, more tailored looking than ever.

"How's your millionaire?" asked Hallie.

"Fine," answered Emma, "it was great of you to tell me about clothes and things."

"That's right," said Hallie, "I see you're sticking to the styles I picked out for you. I hope your millionaire is the real thing." Emma, for some reason, felt almost insulted. It had been, well, almost coarse of Hallie.

Then Mrs. Fraylir went away for the summer. Emma learned about it when Mrs. Fraylir talked over the telephone to Edward or Frederick, whichever one happened to be in the office when she rang up.

"Now's the time," thought Emma, "when their wives go away and they realize how misjudged they've been." But she wasn't exactly enthusiastic about it.

Fraylir took her out to dinner and to the summer gardens. She tried to show him how sympathetic she could be. It surprised her to find out that she really meant it. She was almost afraid to use all of the little tricks that she had learned in Black Plains. It didn't seem honest.

Sometimes Edward Fraylir went with them, but usually the two of them went alone.

She got a letter saying that Millie was married—she had finally landed the drummer who travelled out of Kansas City. And Irma, next youngest, was going with a Black Plains boy who kept a cigar store. Emma had to write back that she was still working and she took the answering jokes about her city success without a murmur. After all, there were so many things besides getting a rich papa!

And then, one night without warning—

Frederick Fraylir and Emma had stayed in the office after the others had gone. There was some work that had to be copied and they were going to have dinner together. As Emma slipped the last page from the typewriter, Frederick bent over her.

"Little girl," he said, "do you know that I care very much for you?" Emma closed her eyes. She was afraid to say anything. Why couldn't things have kept on—the way they were? Her heart was beating rather rapidly. She had never thought about that.

"Don't you care, a little?" Frederick went on. "You must have known, how I felt, all these weeks."

"I don't know what you mean," said Emma. She sud-

denly remembered that that was the right answer, though she was afraid that she had put it in the wrong place.

"Why, I mean," said Frederick, "that I love you. I've cared for you from the first. It's hard to say—for an old fellow like me. You are so innocent, so sweet. You are so little and alone and unprotected. I love you, I want to—"

Well, so it was over! "What about Mrs. Fraylir?" interrupted Emma. Mrs. Fraylir had never been brought into their conversation before. The words seemed to choke Emma a little.

"Why, dear, she likes you too. She told Edward that as long as I felt this way, she hoped you liked me. She wanted to talk to you when she came to the office, but she was afraid she'd say the wrong thing, as long as I hadn't said anything to you. I know you'll like her, though. Edward and she will be glad they won't have to bother with me, I guess. Ever since they've been married, over seven years, I've lived with them. They said they wanted me, but I guess they'll be glad if—" he paused.

"Ever since they've been married?" repeated Emma, mechanically. "I thought, why I thought—"

Frederick misunderstood her.

"Oh, yes," he said, "seven years, and I'd like a home of my own. We can be married whenever you say the word, if you love me a little and I'm not too old. I've wanted to tell you for a long time, wanted to offer you a real home, wanted you to stop work, but you were so young, so unaccustomed to the world. I wanted you to know me and like me a little first, so that I wouldn't

frighten you when I proposed. You're the kind of a girl I've always been looking for, a simple, small-town girl with pure thoughts about things. You'll marry me, won't you, dear?"

And Emma, quite overcome, put her head on his shoulder and wept a little and said she thought she would. After all, she was all alone in the city and only a little country girl.

# GRANDMA

## I

GRANDMA awoke with a start. She gained consciousness with the feeling that something was just about to happen. Then she sank back again on the pillow with a comfortable sigh of remembrance. Of course—this was the day on which she was going travelling.

Even on usual days, Grandma could not lie in bed, idle. So much more reason why she should be up and about, today, with so much to do. Her train left at twelve o'clock—she had had her ticket and her berth reservation for over a week, her trunk was all packed, there were just a few necessary articles to put into her bag—but the morning would be busy, as all mornings were at Fred's.

Grandma bathed and dressed hurriedly, her bent, rheumatic fingers grasping each hook and button with a nervous haste. As usual, she was the first one in the bathroom. This morning she was especially glad. For at Fred's, Grandma's second son's house, where she was visiting now, there was only one bathroom and there were eight in the family without her, if you count the two babies. If you didn't get in the bathroom first . . .

Grandma put on her neat housedress, as was her wont. She could change her dress later, and stuff the housedress

into her bag. She arranged her thin grey hair in neat waves around her face—she could smooth that again, too.

From a room at the other end of the house Grandma heard a baby commence to cry. It was Ruthie, Nell's youngest baby, just a year old, one of Grandma's two great-grandchildren. Grandma loved little Ruthie a great deal, a fine baby—still, it did seem good that she wouldn't have to take care of her any more for a long time. Not that Grandma minded work—she had always worked, she liked something to do—but here at Fred's house there were so few moments when she wasn't working. Not that Fred's family were mean to her! Grandma would have been indignant if you had suggested that. Didn't they work as hard as she did, and harder? At seventy-three, Grandma was still strong and capable; no wonder they expected her to do her share and accepted it without comment.

Fred was a good son and a good husband and a good father. Could you expect much more? But Fred never had much of a business head. Here he was, at forty-nine, just about where he had been fifteen years before, book-keeper at the Harper Feed Store, a good enough position when times were better, but, with everything so high, Fred's salary didn't go very far. Still, no use complaining or worrying him about it, it was the best he could do. Fred never had had much ambition or "get up." It was a good thing he had bought the house, years before. It had seemed too big and rambling then. It was just about the right size now, though not so awfully modern—and quite hard to keep clean.

Emma, Fred's wife, was a good woman and a good housekeeper. She wasn't like the average daughter-in-law, either. She never quarrelled with Grandma about things—in fact, she was awfully kind, in her hurried, brusque way. Grandma sometimes wished she wasn't so quick about things, and decided—still, when one is as busy as Emma . . .

Emma was nearly Fred's age. They had been married twenty-five years and she had always been a good wife to him. They had three children, all girls. Grandma had been sorry there couldn't have been a son to help Fred share the burden of supporting the family. But things seemed going all right now—a little better than they had been, or so the family seemed to think—and, as long as they were satisfied . . .

Nell, Fred's oldest daughter, had married, four years before, and had gone to housekeeping. But Homer Billingsley, the boy she had married, had been sick for almost a year, so they had given up their little cottage and were living "with the old folks." They had two children now, Freddie and Ruthie, nice good children, too. Grandma liked Homer, Nell's husband, though she was sorry he was so much like Fred in his lack of ambition and power. Now that Homer was able to work again he had his old job at Malton's Hardware Store. There didn't seem much chance of his getting ahead there. Still, he was a good boy and awfully fond of Nell and the children.

Edna, Fred's second daughter, was stenographer at the First National Bank and made fifteen dollars a week. Edna was fine looking, really the beauty of the family.

She paid her board every week, but never had much left over because she bought Alice's clothes, too, and, of course, being in the bank, she had to look nice herself. Alice, the youngest daughter, was seventeen and in High School. Grandma loved Alice, too. Of course the child was thoughtless, she could have helped her mother a little more with the housework or Nell with the babies, but Grandma knew that, at seventeen, it's pretty hard to sweep floors or take babies out. After all, Alice was young, and she ought to have a good time.

While she stayed at Fred's house, Grandma did her share of the work. Even this last morning she followed her usual routine.

She hurried to the room where Ruthie lay and soon had her quieted. When Ruthie had her bottle—Grandma had learned all about sterilizing, though she hadn't known there was such a thing when she brought up her own children—Grandma set the table, a plate, knife and spoon for each, salt and pepper castors that had been a wedding present to Emma and Fred, a butter dish with an uneven piece of butter in it, a sugar bowl containing rather lumpy sugar and a fluted sugar spoon, a dish of home-made plum preserves. She had the table all set when Emma hurried into the kitchen with a cheery, abrupt "Morning, Ma," and started the coffee.

At half-past seven all but Alice were ready for breakfast. Grandma had got the oatmeal out of the fireless cooker and boiled the eggs for Homer, who was rather delicate and needed eggs for breakfast. When the family sat down to their meal, Grandma put milk and sugar on

little Freddie's oatmeal and saw that he ate it—Freddie didn't like oatmeal much.

"Well, Ma," said big Fred, who sat comfortably coatless, "so today's the day you go travelling."

"Yes, it is," said Grandma and smiled.

"You got a good day for it. Let's see, you leave Lexington today at noon and get to New York tomorrow at two, don't you?"

"Yes, Fred," said Grandma.

"You know," he went on, munching toast as he talked, "I believe you enjoy travelling, going places. Never saw anything like it. Seems to me a woman your age would want to settle down, quiet. You could stay here all the time if you wanted to, you know that. Got a room all to yourself—more than you get at Mary's—and yet, off you go, after four or five months. Here you've got a good home and all that."

"Well," said Grandma, in her gentle, even tones, "you know you aren't the only child I've got, Fred. There's Albert and Mary."

"Yes," Fred frowned. He disliked even hearing the name of Albert. It was the one thing that made him angry. "But we really want you, honest we do, Ma. Emma and the girls always miss you after you're gone."

"You bet," said Emma.

Grandma smiled. At least at Fred's home she was welcome and helpful. If she were only younger and stronger! At Mary's and Albert's, there was a wordless agreement that her visits end, almost mechanically, at the end of four months. Only mere surface invitations

of further hospitality were extended "for politeness."

Fred and Homer finished eating and hurried off to business. Alice came down, then, and Grandma served her, bringing in hot coffee and oatmeal, as Emma started to clear away the dishes.

Alice ate rapidly, then kissed Grandma good-bye—she didn't come home at noon—and skipped off. Grandma and her daughter-in-law washed the dishes and, when the dishes were done, they made the beds, one standing on each side, straightening the sheets and pulling up the covers simultaneously.

"Sure will miss you, Ma," said Emma. "Nell's no help at all. Don't blame her. Freddie tagging at her heels and the baby crying."

While Emma straightened up the downstairs rooms, Grandma helped Nell bathe and dress the babies. Then the expressman rang and Grandma hurried to the door, saw that he took her trunk and put the check in her purse. Then Grandma cleaned up the room she had occupied. It was time, then, for Grandma to get ready for her journey. Usually, she helped prepare dinner after these tasks were done, peeling potatoes, setting the table, for at Fred's one ate dinner in the middle of the day.

Grandma put on her travelling dress. It was her best dress, of soft grey silk crêpe, trimmed with a bit of fine cream lace at the throat. Albert had given it to her on her birthday, two years before. Over this she put her best coat of black ribbed silk, also a gift of Albert. She adjusted her neat bonnet—five years old but made over every year and you'd never guess it.

Emma and Nell were too busy with dinner and the

babies to go to the station with Grandma, but the street-car that passed the corner went right to the station, and Homer and Fred would be there to tell her good-bye. At eleven—Grandma believed in taking plenty of time, you never could tell what might happen on the way to the station—Grandma kissed Emma and Nell and Freddie and Ruthie, giving Ruthie a very tender hug and Freddie a hearty kiss, in spite of much stickiness from the penny lollypop he had been eating. She took her bag and hurrying as fast as she could—Grandma took little, slow rheumatic steps—she caught the surface car.

In the railway station Grandma sat down gingerly on one of the long brown benches, carefully pulling her skirts away from suspicious tobaccoy-looking spots on the floor, and waited for Fred and Homer and the train.

Fred and Homer came up, together, puffing, just before the train was due. Homer presented Grandma with a half-pound box of candy and Fred gave her a paper bag filled with fruit.

When the train came in, Fred and Homer both assisted Grandma in getting on, took her to her seat and kissed her, loudly, before their hurried exit—the Limited stops for only a minute at Lexington.

Then, as the train moved away, Grandma waved a fluttering good-bye to the two men and sighed again, with happiness. She was travelling!

II

Not consciously, of course, for she never would have admitted such a terrible fact, Grandma looked forward, all year, to her days of travel. Usually, each

year contained three trips, each of about the same length, and these days were Grandma's golden milestones. Not that she wasn't happy the rest of the time—of course she was—but this—well, this was different.

At Fred's now—Grandma was happy at Fred's, of course, every one was friendly and pleasant, though her feet and head and sometimes her back ached at the end of the day. One isn't so young at seventy-three and younger people are apt to forget how tired seventy-three becomes, after innumerable answerings of the door, step-climbing and dish-washing. Grandma loved being useful, of course, but she did wish that there was a little more leisure, a little time to sit down and rest—if only Fred's and Albert's homes could be combined, in some way!

Grandma had three children. When they were young there had never been much money, but Grandma had tried to do her best for them. They had lived in Lexington then, and the three had been brought up just alike and yet how differently they had turned out! There was Fred, quite poor but happy, still in Lexington, where he was born. Mary had married John Falconer when she was twenty-four and had gone to St. Louis to live, and Albert, the ambitious one of the family, had gone to New York in search of fortune and had found part of it, at least.

If only Fred and Albert hadn't been so foolish and quarrelled, years ago! But they had. Albert had tried to give Fred advice and Fred had resented it. They had made up the quarrel, but there was nothing that Fred would let Albert do for him, even if Albert had wanted to do something. Fred liked to refer, in scorn, to his

elder brother as "that New York millionaire," and say things about being "just as well off if I haven't got his money." But then, Albert probably forgot, most of the time, that he had a younger brother. Outside of a polite inquiry, when Grandma arrived, he never referred to Fred at all. It worried Grandma to think that her children weren't good friends, but she knew she could never do anything to make them feel differently. Years and circumstances had taken them too far apart.

Grandma had no favorite child, unless it was a slight, natural leaning toward her only daughter. She liked Albert and was glad she was on her way to visit him. She just wished that Albert wasn't so—well, so cold. He didn't mean anything, of course. When one is busy all day on the Stock Exchange one hasn't time for other things. And, when one is as rich as Albert, there are so many things to take up one's time. Albert was awfully good to Grandma. She told herself that many times. He asked her if she needed anything, whenever she visited him. He frequently gave her expensive presents. She wouldn't take any more money from him than she had to, and her wants were simple, for that wouldn't have been right, though she let him give her some on her last visit and had given it to Nell for Homer—he had been sick then—without letting Fred find out.

Grandma liked it all right at Albert's. How could there be anything to complain of? At seventy-three, Grandma had learned to make the best of things. Albert was Grandma's oldest child and now he was fifty-two. His ménage consisted of his wife, Florence; their

two children, Albert, junior, who, at twenty-four, was being taught the business of Wall Street; their daughter, Arlene, twenty, and six servants.

The Albert Cunninghams lived in a very large apartment in Park Avenue. Mrs. Cunningham was of rather a good New York family. Albert had met her after his first taste of success and had been greatly impressed with her and her antecedents. Even then Albert had learned to look ahead. The family had had some years of social strivings, but now lived rather quietly. Arlene had made her début the year before and now entertained and went out quite a little. Albert, junior, was rather a serious fellow, though he, too, enjoyed the social life that was open to him. Altogether, they were fairly sensible, decent people, a bit snobbish, perhaps, very self-centred, but with no really objectionable features.

The thing that Grandma couldn't understand nor enjoy in the Albert Cunninghams' family life was the, to her, great coldness and formality. Grandma's idea of how a family ought to live was the way Fred's family lived, only with more money and more leisure and more pleasure and a servant or two, friendly, jolly, intimate. At Albert's, the life was strangely lonely and distant. Grandma never felt quite at ease nor at home. She had no definite place in the family life. She had the fear, constantly, that she was doing something wrong, much more so than at Mary's, where her acts were criticized and commented on. No one ever gave Grandma a harsh word at Albert's. Albert, dignified; Florence, courteous, calm; Junior, a young edition of his father; Arlene, gentle, distant, quiet,—were all kind to Grandma. But most

of the time they unthinkingly ignored her. She didn't fit in, she knew that.

At Albert's, Grandma had her own room and her own bath, as did each member of the family. There was no regular "family breakfast." Albert and Junior breakfasted about nine, going to the office in the closed car. Florence and Arlene breakfasted in their rooms. Grandma had gone to the dining-room for breakfast, on her first visit there eight years ago, after Grandpa died and her own modest home had been broken up. But Florence decided that it would be more comfortable for Grandma if she breakfasted in her room. So each morning, about nine, Grandma's tray was brought up to her by Florence's own maid, Terry, who asked, each time, "if there is anything I can do?" Grandma rather resented a personal maid. Wasn't she able to bathe and dress herself, even if she was seventy-three? Grandma was always dressed when Terry knocked.

All day there was nothing for Grandma to do at Albert's. She couldn't help at all around the house. She found that out, at her first visit. There was no darning nor mending to be done—a sewing woman came in regularly to do the things that Terry could not do. Albert didn't care for the home dishes that had once delighted him and the cook didn't want any one bothering around the kitchen. Grandma had luncheon at one, with Florence and Arlene, when they were at home, which was seldom enough. In the afternoon, on nice days, Grandma went for a drive, unless the cars were being used. Usually Grandma went alone, getting real pleasure out of the things she saw; sometimes Florence went with her.

Florence, too, occasionally took Grandma to teas and receptions and musicales, most of which bored Grandma and at none of which did she feel at home.

Grandma wondered where all of the old ladies were in New York. She seldom saw any. At the theatre, where she was taken once in a while, she would see white-haired old dowagers, carefully marcelled and massaged, in evening gowns with very low-cut bodices. Grandma didn't mean that kind of old lady. She was always looking for comfortable old ladies, with neatly parted hair, ample old ladies with little rheumatic hands and wrinkles, but she never found them.

Dinner, at Albert's, was at seven. When the family dined alone, at home, the meals were about the same, good things to eat, but everything so cold and distant. It was hard for Grandma to remember just what to do, so that Florence and Arlene wouldn't think she didn't know, though they were always polite and gracious. Grandma was constantly afraid she would spill things when the maid presented the silver dishes to her or that she'd take too large a portion for politeness. Grandma was served first—she couldn't watch to see the way the others did.

When the family was having a real dinner party Grandma found that it was easier for every one if she had a tray in her room. She really liked that just as well—it was nice, seated at the little table in her room, comfortably unannoyed by manners. About half of the time the Albert Cunninghams did not dine at home—Arlene and Junior went to numerous dinners and even Florence and Albert had frequent engagements. Then Grandma usually dined alone in the big empty dining-room, a little,

lonely figure amid empty chairs, silver and glass. She would have preferred a tray in her room, then, but didn't like to mention it—this arrangement seemed to suit Florence. Grandma's meals were always excellently prepared and served, but eating alone in a big, still room isn't very jolly.

After dinner, Grandma was occasionally included in some social affair, but nearly always she was supposed to sit in the library until about nine or ten and then retire, as the other members of the family sometimes did when they were at home. The family saw that Grandma was given interesting light fiction and magazines full of stories and current events, but Grandma had never had enough leisure in her youth to find time to learn to enjoy reading. She could read only a short time without falling asleep.

Grandma knitted, too, so she was glad when the fad came back so she could be modern in something. Albert's family approved of knitting, and on the last visit her old fingers had made many pairs of socks and sweaters for charity. Now she was glad to be able to get to knitting—she had had no time for it since she had been there before.

Yes—Albert and his family were awfully nice—of course they didn't mean anything, when they paid no attention to Grandma, when their days went on as serenely undisturbed as if she were not there. They asked her how she felt, nearly every day, a cool "trust you are well this morning, Mother," and gave her presents. But thinking of the lonely hours in her room, the tiresome evenings, the long, useless, dragged-out days, Grandma wasn't enthusiastic over her visit with Albert.

III

Mary, Mrs. John Falconer, Grandma's youngest child, had always been a bit her favourite. Mary still lived in St. Louis, where she had gone after her marriage. The Falconers had four children, two sons of eighteen and fourteen, two daughters, sixteen and eleven. John Falconer, a lawyer of moderate means, was quite stingy in family matters. Although he had a great deal more money than Fred, the family occupied a much smaller house, though it was modern and in a good neighbourhood, and Grandma had to share the bedroom of the two daughters. Mary's family had an advantage over Fred's in having one maid, who did all of the cooking and washing and some of the cleaning, so there was not so much for Grandma to do. Grandma felt that she should have been very happy with the Falconers. But they were disagreeable people to live with. Grandma tried not to see their faults but it was not easy for her to be contented during her visits there.

The Falconers had the habit of criticism. Nothing was ever just right with them. Mary always told Grandma that if it hadn't been for Grandma's encouragement she would never have married John Falconer—if she had waited she probably could have done much better. John Falconer was a former Lexington boy whom Mary had met when he was visiting his old home. Grandma didn't remember that she had encouraged the match except to tell Mary that John was a nice boy and would probably make a good husband—Mary had been the one who seemed enthusiastic. But, somehow,

Grandma was blamed whenever John showed disagreeable characteristics.

Mary was dissatisfied with her social position, with the amount of money John gave her to spend, with her children. She spoke slurringly of Albert and "his rich family who are in society." Mary would ask Grandma innumerable questions about the way the Albert Cunninghams lived, copy them when circumstances permitted and later bring the unused bits of information into the conversation, with disagreeable slurs.

"I guess Albert wouldn't call this dinner good enough for him, would he? It's a wonder you are satisfied here, Mamma, without a butler to answer the door or a maid to bring breakfast to your room," or "It's a wonder Albert and Florence wouldn't do something for Irene. I bet she's a lot smarter and better looking than their stuck-up daughter. But not a thing does he do for her, except send a little box on Christmas—gave Irene a cheap wrist watch last year—you could buy the same kind right here in St. Louis. He could keep it for all I'd care."

The four Falconer children were badly brought up and noisy. They interrupted each other or all talked at once. At meals they reached across the table for dishes of food. The one maid had had no training and, as she did the cooking, her waitress duties consisted of putting bowls and platters of food on the table. Then John Falconer made a pretence of serving, always, after one or two plates, he'd "pass the things around so you can all help yourselves."

As there was no attempt to show Grandma any special

favour—she was never served first, the first plate going to the person in the greatest hurry to get away, frequently Tom the eldest son—usually when the bowl or platter reached Grandma there was little left for her. Grandma didn't mind this, unless the food happened to be a favourite—she had become accustomed to little sacrifices while raising her family. There was always enough bread and butter.

What Grandma did object to at Mary's was the spirit of unrest, the unkindness, the disagreeable taunts of the family, the noise and disorder. Every one criticized Grandma, calling her attention to the way she held her fork, though their own manners were frequently insufferable. They criticized, too, Grandma's pronunciation of words, idioms of Lexington, and errors in grammar. These were made much of and repeated, with laughter. Then, too, if Grandma showed ignorance of any modern appliance or invention, this was thought to be a great joke and was introduced as a titbit in the table conversation.

Grandma darned all of the stockings at Mary's—there always seemed to be a basketful—and took care of the bedroom in which she slept, relieving the two girls of an unwelcome duty. She straightened the living-room, for Mary hated housework and grumbled about it and the overworked maid never quite got through her round of duties. But Grandma was not too busy at Mary's. She liked having something to do. It was the taunts that made her unhappy, the little barbed things the family said. John Falconer made Grandma feel that she was an actual expense, that the amount of food she ate was

a real item in the household budget. Mary came to her with little whines about the relatives—though they lived in other cities and paid little attention to her—about her husband, how stingy he was, how much better she could have done, had she not taken her mother's advice in her marriage, about the children, how much money they spent, how they quarrelled with each other, how disobedient they were. Grandma always went from Mary's home to Fred's, and though she knew the work that awaited her, the tired hours in store, she actually looked forward to the next visit.

IV

So now, Grandma was travelling again. And, as the train covered the miles away from Lexington, Grandma put aside the worries of the visit she had just had, the memories of the unpleasantness of the visit with Mary, the apprehensions of the visit that awaited her. Grandma shed, all at once, all of these things and emerged, a wonderful, new personality, a dear, happy little old lady, travelling. Grandma became, as she always became, three days of each year, the woman she would have liked to have been, the old lady she sometimes dreamed she was.

First, Grandma rang for the porter. She was well supplied with money for Albert always sent her a check for travelling expenses. She loved feeling independent, a personality. When the porter came, Grandma demanded, in the gentle, well-bred tone Florence might have used, that the porter bring her an envelope for her bonnet, a pillow for her head, a stool for her feet. She tipped him generously enough to make him grin his

thanks and hurry to her whenever she rang. There were even porters who said, "Yes'm, you travelled on my car before," when they saw Grandma.

From her bag, Grandma took out a small black lace cap, with a bit of perky lavender ribbon on it and adjusted it on her thinning hair. At Mary's house they were always telling her how thin her hair looked, the young boy even hinting something about old people who ought to wear wigs. Albert had sent her the cap in her last Christmas box, and, as usual, she had saved it for travelling. Grandma put on, too, a pair of gold-rimmed spectacles. She had needed them for years, but at first a sort of pride in her good eyes had kept her from getting them. Then, at Fred's, she had been too busy; at Albert's, no one paid much attention to her needs; at Mary's they had laughed at her near-sightedness without offering a corrective. When she was at Albert's, last year, she had told him, finally, her need of glasses and the next day Florence had driven her to an oculist. But she felt that she had annoyed and disturbed Florence, that getting glasses for an old lady wasn't just in Florence's pattern of things.

Grandma put the cheap candy and the fruit from Fred and Homer into her bag. It had been awfully kind and good of them. She took out her knitting and added row after row, as the minutes passed.

Then Grandma rang for the porter again. But, before he came, she looked around at her fellow passengers, as she always looked at them when she travelled. Two seats in front of her sat a tired-looking woman of about forty, with a thin, drawn face. Knitting in hand,

Grandma took slow, careful little steps up the train to her.

"How do you do?" said Grandma, with her sweetest smile, "I wonder if you won't have tea with me, keep an old lady company? It seems so—so unsocial, having tea alone."

The woman gasped and looked at Grandma. She saw the well-dressed, comfortable little old lady, with the frill of soft lace at throat and wrists, a tiny black cap on her grey hair, grey knitting in her gnarled hands, a picture-book Grandma for all the world.

"Why, yes, I—that would be delightful," she said.

Grandma led the way back to her own seat. When the porter came she ordered tea and toast and little cakes and sandwiches, "and some of that good orange marmalade you always have on this road."

Grandma hadn't had any lunch but she didn't say so. When the little table was adjusted and the tea things brought in, Grandma poured tea, as if, every day, in her own home, the routine included the serving of tea at a dear little tea table.

Grandma listened sympathetically to the other woman's story. Grandma knew that each woman who was travelling had a story and would tell it, if encouraged at all, but she wasn't much interested—she had heard so many stories during the past years. Then, when her guest had finished, Grandma talked.

Grandma didn't say much, really. She told about her visits, about her two wonderful sons and her splendid daughter. As Grandma told these things, they, too, emerged into beauty, the journey threw a magic over

them as it did over Grandma. The things she told were so real that Grandma believed them, herself, because she wanted to.

"I have three children, so, of course, I spend four months of the year with each of them. Each of them wanted me all the time—they are such good children—so the best way seemed to be to divide the time. I'm on my way to visit my older son, now. Maybe, as you've lived in New York, you've heard of him—he has a seat on the Stock Exchange and is a director in so many things—Albert Morrell Cunningham. His wife was a Mornington, and they have two such wonderful children, a boy and a girl. Arlene made her début last year, so you can imagine what a good time she's having and what fun it is to be there with her, she's so popular and pretty. I'll show you her picture, later. Each day I'm there, nearly, they do something for me, a drive in the park, theatres and concerts. I really get too gay in the city—it's wonderful.

"Then I go to see Mary, my only daughter, and you know how a mother feels toward a daughter. She is married to a lawyer in St. Louis and they have four of the dearest children. The oldest, a boy, is eighteen and the youngest, a girl, is eleven. Quite an ideal family, isn't it? Mary's husband is quite well-to-do, but they live so comfortably and simply, no airs at all. Mary doesn't care a great deal for society, just wrapped up in her husband and children, but she goes with such nice people.

"I've just come from my second son, Fred. And there—perhaps you'd never guess it, people have flattered me so long about looking youthful that I believe them—but

I've two great-grandchildren, the older three years old, the younger just a year, the dearest things. Nell, the children's mother and her husband and the children are all living right at home. Fred and his wife won't hear of them going away. They were housekeeping for a while, but the family didn't like it—they are all so devoted to the children. There are two other girls in the family besides Nell and they have a great big old-fashioned home, set way back in a broad lawn, lots of trees and flowers. Yes, it's Fred's own home. It's a good thing he bought such a big one, years ago, he needs it with so many young people. They do have such good times together—and, of course, it's young people who keep us all young, these days."

Then, from her bag, Grandma drew a bundle of photographs. The photographers, from the maker of the shiny products of Lexington to the creator of the soft sepias of Fifth Avenue, had, with their usual skill at disguise, smoothed away the lines of discontent on Mary's face, the bold impudence of her children, had added a little kindness and humanness to Florence and Albert, had made Fred's family look placid, undisturbed and prosperous. The pictures showed Grandma's family to be all she had said of them, even to the dimpled little Ruthie, taken just a few weeks before, on a postcard by a neighbourhood photographer.

It didn't sound like bragging, as Grandma told things. It was just the simple, contented story of an old lady of seventy-three, who spent her days satisfied and serene, travelling from one loving and beloved set of relatives to another.

When tea was finished, Grandma allowed the other woman to return to her seat with a gentle nod and a "thank you for keeping an old woman company." Then Grandma knitted and looked at the passengers again. Always, whenever she travelled, out of the set that presented itself, Grandma was able to find those she needed.

A tiny, plump little woman with a too-fat baby was seated just a seat or so back of Grandma, on the left. It was to her that Grandma went, now.

"May I hold the baby?" she asked. "I know how tired you must get, holding him all day, on a day like this. I've two great-grandchildren. Your baby is just about in between them, in age, I think. Sometimes, I hold them for just a little while and I know how heavy babies can be."

Deftly, Grandma took the child in her arms and settled him comfortably.

"When dinner is announced," said Grandma, "you go in and eat. I'll take care of the baby. It will be a rest for you—it is so difficult travelling with a baby—you'll enjoy your dinner more, alone. Sometimes, when we go on picnics with my great-grandchildren . . . "

Grandma told about the babies, about their mother, about her own grown-up children, whom she visited. She even told little things about their childhood, as mothers tell to mothers, but, always, she came back to the present, telling of her visits, encased in the rose colour of her journey. Not that Grandma told deliberate falsehoods. She didn't claim servants or wealth for Fred nor jollity for Albert. But each fact she brought forth was

broidered with the romance that travel brought to Grandma—the stories all showed Grandma welcome, beloved, happy, made her children kind, considerate, affectionate, successful, capable. Grandma helped her listeners, too, for she spread some of this haze over them. You can't envy, you must enter into the pleasure of it, when an old lady of seventy-three shows you the treasures that a lifetime has handed to her.

Grandma smiled as she sat with the little mother and her baby. And she smiled as she held the heavy, squirming bundle, while the mother ate dinner.

"It's a real pleasure to help you even a little," said Grandma, as the woman came back from the dining car to claim her baby and thank Grandma.

Grandma washed her face carefully before she went in to her own dinner. She took a clean handkerchief from her bag, dainty, lavender-bordered, the present that Edna, Fred's second daughter, had given her last Christmas. On it she sprinkled a bit of perfume, a gift from Alice, two years before. She smoothed her hair, brushed the dust from her waist. A new adventure always awaited her in the dining car.

She walked with stiff little steps the length of the three cars, holding tight to the seats as she passed. And, through the cars, she smiled at the children and to grown-ups, smiles a bit patronizing, perhaps, as smiles should be from such a distinguished, contented old lady.

In the diner, Grandma was seated across from a stout, middle-aged man, who was eating an enormous meal. She smiled at him. He couldn't misjudge her—one doesn't flirt that way at seventy-three.

"It's a wonderful day for travelling, isn't it?" she said. Last time I travelled, four months ago . . ."

Grandma was telling of her children, of her journeys.

Grandma ordered carefully—a steak, you are really safe about steaks when you travel, a fresh vegetable, a green salad, a bit of pastry, black coffee. Grandma ordered as if the ordering of a dinner were a usual but precious rite. She felt correct, prosperous, a woman of the world. The man across the table, pleased with his meal and moved a bit by Grandma's story of her happy and fortunate life, her devoted children, saw in Grandma the things that made this devotion. He even grew a bit gallant.

"I can see why your children are so good to you, ma'am. It makes me wish I had a grandma or mother like you myself." This during mouthfuls.

Grandma was equal to it.

"Why me, I'm just what my children have made me. Just think of you, making such lovely speeches to an old lady. You're deserving of the best mother a man ever had, I'm sure."

There were more pretty speeches. The man became almost flowery. Grandma actually blushed, before she paid her check, adding her usual generous tip—the stranger had offered to pay but Grandma wouldn't have that, of course. Then, as Grandma arose, the man opposite rose, too, and courteously escorted her through the cars and to her seat, stopping for a moment to talk.

Grandma couldn't knit at night. The motion of the car and the electric lights were not a good combination for her old eyes. She put her knitting into her bag

and extracted a deck of cards, flamboyant, with green and gold gift-looking backs. She chose now two young women and a good-looking young man in his early thirties. She approached them all with the same question.

"Wouldn't you like a game of bridge? It seems so lonely, an evening alone, in a sleeper—"

Strangely, all three did play bridge and would like a game. The porter brought a little table, again, and they played, rather indifferently, to be sure—Grandma was no expert and one of the young women played even a poorer game than she did—but several hours passed pleasantly. Then, after they stopped playing, Grandma brought the fruit from her bag. Grandma told them about Fred bringing the fruit to her, and, as they ate, she told, too, of her visits, of her children, her grandchildren, and the two little great-grand ones. The three card-players really seemed interested, so of course the photographs were brought out for a round of approval.

After the guests had gone to their seats, Grandma had her berth made up. She was rather particular about this—she wanted it made with her feet to the engine. Grandma thought this knowing about head and foot gave her a travelled air. Besides, she really didn't like to feel that she was travelling backwards.

In the dressing-room she put on her violet silk dressing gown, a gift from Florence three years before, which she kept carefully for travelling, and a frivolous little cap of cream lace, to keep the dust out of her hair while she slept. She spread her ivory travelling articles in their leather case—five years old on her last birthday—before her, and, as she prepared for sleep, talked pleasantly with

the woman who happened to come into the dressing-room while she was there.

Grandma slept fairly well for travelling, waking up frequently to pull up the shade and look out on the hurrying landscape, the occasional lights, the little towns. She thought it was mighty pleasant travelling.

She was up at seven and dressed swiftly. A new woman had got on during the night and now occupied the seat opposite Grandma, a well-gowned woman in her late thirties, with a smart, city-like air.

Grandma nodded a pleasant good morning.

"We seem to be making good time," she said.

"Yes, indeed," the woman smiled, "pleasant day for travelling."

With the air of one born traveller to another, Grandma talked a bit, then motioned the woman to sit beside her. The pleasant conversation gave Grandma a warm feeling of well-being. She suggested breakfast and the two of them went in together, the younger woman steadying Grandma just a bit when the train swayed around a curve.

It was a pleasant breakfast. Grandma ordered three-minute eggs. They were the way she liked eggs best, but she seldom had them. At Albert's it seemed so self-assertive to ask for things like that, special directions and everything—and at Fred's and Mary's!

Grandma and her new friend talked about New York, about plays they had both seen the year before. They discussed food and the cost of living, servants, the usual things that two hardly acquainted women talk of, when circumstance throws them together. There was nothing

condescending in the new acquaintance's attitude. Why should there have been? Grandma was neither an unnecessary member of a cool, indifferent household nor an overworked old woman—she was the ideal Grandma, cultured, clever, kindly. It was no wonder, then, that, after breakfast, the two of them should loiter in Grandma's seat and Grandma should show a few family photographs and dwell, pleasantly, on how fortunate she was in having such splendid sons, such a lovely daughter and such wonders of grandchildren, to say nothing of the two babies.

Then the woman suggested that she and Grandma go to the observation car, and, before long, Grandma was seated in a big chair, knitting again, and glancing at the flying scenery.

All the morning Grandma's former acquaintances came to talk to her. The thin woman with the sad face offered her some candy. Grandma had a little chat with the plump mother and the baby and held the baby again while his mother ate luncheon. The stout man, reading a magazine, dropped it long enough to come over and ask Grandma how she was feeling and if there was anything he could do for her. Grandma's bridge companions, now well acquainted, with the sudden friendship that travel brings, gathered around Grandma for a chat, laughing at everything. Several others, coming into the car, stopped for a word with Grandma.

Grandma and her latest acquaintance had luncheon together, too. Then, after luncheon, Grandma prepared, a whole hour ahead, as she always did, for the end of her journey. She washed off as much of the soot as she

could. She took off the little lace cap and replaced it with her decent old bonnet, which had been resting in its bag all this time. She slipped on her black travelling coat over her grey crêpe dress. She took out a clean handkerchief, sprinkling a bit of perfume on it. Before closing her bag, Grandma took out the cheap candy that Homer had brought to the station and gave it, with a gracious smile, to the woman with the baby. It was good to be able to give something—and, besides, what could she do with the candy at Albert's? She didn't care for candy and even the servants would have laughed at it.

Grandma closed her bag then and sat waiting. Her chance acquaintances passed, nodded, smiled and talked. Grandma was a real person of importance, a dear, happy old lady, with a devoted family, spending her life contentedly divided among them. Didn't all these people know about Grandma? Hadn't they heard of her children and her grandchildren and her great-grandchildren? Hadn't they seen their photographs, even? Didn't they know that, after four pleasant months with Fred and his happy, jovial family, she was on her way to visit Albert, rich and prominent and kind?

## V

The train drew into the Grand Central Station. Grandma, trembling a little—for the excitement of travelling is apt to make one tremble at seventy-three—allowed the porter to brush her coat, bade farewell to her train acquaintances, followed her bag down the aisle and into the station.

A man in a chauffeur's uniform took Grandma's bag and addressing Grandma politely, gravely, told her that Mr. and Mrs. Cunningham were sorry, but engagements prevented them from meeting her. They would see her at dinner at seven.

Grandma, with short, unsteady little steps, went out to the waiting car. There was something very near a tear in her eye. After all, travelling has its difficulties when one is seventy-three. The shell of radiance, of smiling independence, of being cared-for, important, loved, fell away. Grandma was just a little, tired, lonely old lady again. Another of Grandma's romantic journeys was over.

# MAMIE CARPENTER

## I

MILLERSVILLE, MISSOURI, was the usual small town. It boasted, according to the Millersville *Eagle* and the annual leaflet of the Chamber of Commerce, a population of twenty thousand souls. There were, perhaps, ten thousand actual human beings in Millersville, including the farmers within a radius of five miles, the few Italians and Slavs down near the railroad tracks, and the negroes.

Millersville's main street extended nearly the full length of the town, footed by the Sulpulpa River and the Union Depot, and headed by the Brick Church. On Hill Street were the Grand Hotel—five stories high; the Bon Marché and the New York Store, whose buyers went to New York—or anyhow Chicago—twice each year; the Busy Bee, candy fresh every day, always two kinds of ice cream, with marble topped tables in the back half of it for sodas and ice creams; an assortment of drug stores and cigar stores; garages, still carrying the outward semblance of the stables from which they had sprung; "gents' furnishings," with clerks who copied, in their fashion, the styles in the men's clothing advertisements, always standing near the doors where they could most easily ogle the feminine passerby; groceries displaying the season's best potatoes and onions, with saw-

dust floors and clerks in white aprons and pencils behind their ears; and two furniture stores with windows brimming with golden oak rockers.

On either side of Hill Street, the streets stretched out in a regular checkerboard, the first blocks of them devoted to the lesser business establishments that had overflowed Hill Street, and the remaining blocks given over to residences. The majority of these streets, a few blocks out, were full of neat houses—old houses with mansard roofs and cupolas; new houses in atrocious, too-low bungalow effects, with awful, protruding roofs; simple white cottages, each with its green lawn and over half with a red swing in front and a small, one-car garage in back. Then came a turning into tumbledown negro quarters or the homes of the neighbourhood "white trash."

There was a difference in streets, too. Up near the Brick Church the streets were respectable for all their length, the houses were bigger, and the lawns were better cared for. Maple Street, the last to enter Hill, was the best of all, turning into Maple Road, later on, when it became even more select until, when it reached Burton Addition—the old Burton farm—it burst forth into a spasm of country homes, a dozen of them, with pretentiously landscaped "grounds."

Each house showed an attempt at grandeur in architecture. Some aped Southern Colonial, with white clapboards or brick; others aimed at English styles, with stucco or half-timber. Each house, too, had a peculiar, inappropriate and ineffectual name: "The Elms," "The Lonesome Pine," "Pleasure," "Crestwood," "Hilltop." Miss Drewsy, of the Millersville *Eagle,* whose rich

cousins, the Horns, lived in Maple Street, which gave her social standing, mentioned the names of these houses in her society column, whenever possible.

On the other side of town, toward Union Station and the river, the streets became gradually less pleasing and less important, until, when one reached Gillen Row, the neat houses had given way to grey ramshackle affairs, a bit tipsy as to roof or wall or chimney, with a porch awry, a baluster missing and an occasional broken window patched with papers or rags. These houses were surrounded by grey lawns tufted with weeds, and around them were unpainted picket fences with half the pickets missing.

Mamie Carpenter lived in Gillen Row, in the least pleasing block of it. Her home was a one-story cottage which had, in its adolescence, showed the spruce yellow and white of a poached egg, but in its senility one could barely see the remains of this glory. The porch which ran across the front sagged. One of the posts was missing. The bottom of the three steps leading up to the porch was loose, the wood breaking into long brown slivers under one's foot. One went directly from the unevenly floored porch, which held two once-green rockers and a bench of slatted wood, into the living room, papered in what had formerly been gold and green but was now a more fortunate, though dirty, tan.

The living room held a figured red rug, a table and half a dozen unmatched chairs, mostly rockers, of uncertain wood and construction. Back of this was the dining room, with a table and four chairs and a huge, golden oak, mirrored sideboard. Next came a narrow

hallway, leading on one side to a dark green kitchen, and on the other to the small and incomplete bath. Beyond were the two bedrooms, one occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Carpenter, who slept in a large bed of yellow wood, with high head and foot board, new when they were married, twenty-two years before, and the other, with its iron and brass bed and rickety dresser of imitation mahogany, occupied by their daughter Mamie.

II

Mamie Carpenter was twenty-one. She could have passed for eighteen; she knew it and, when meeting new acquaintances, she often did. She was small and had blonde hair, not white and faded-looking, but real blonde, which needed only an occasional touching up with peroxide to be a lovely, gleaming mass of gold. Her hair was not especially thick nor long, but it waved naturally and Mamie had acquired the knack of doing it high on her head so that it looked pleasantly mussed and fresh.

Her nose was short and well chiselled. Her eyes were round and blue and she pencilled them just a little, which gave the necessary accent. Her mouth was perhaps a bit too full, but her complexion was creamy and her cheeks pleasantly pink and plump. She had learned that if you can't afford many things, it's better to stick to plain things—if your figure is good enough. Mamie's figure was trim and softly curved, with a roundness that hinted of fat at thirty.

Mamie clerked at the Busy Bee candy store. She had left school in her second year of High School when,

after a series of small accidents at the yards, her father, a "railroad man," found himself more frequently out of work than usual.

She had become tired of school, anyhow, but had kept on going until then, partly out of habit and partly because she felt superior to her parents and her neighbours and wanted the further superiority of a higher education. Her mother could do nothing but housework, and that but poorly, and would not consider the indignity of doing menial labour for others, so Mamie, not knowing where to turn at first, and being untrained, went into the overall factory, one of Millersville's few industries. She found the work monotonous and disagreeable. A doctor's reception room and a cashier's cage next claimed her in turn. Both bored her.

Then she heard that the Busy Bee was enlarging the store and wanted pretty saleswomen. Mamie knew she was pretty. She applied for and got the job and had been there ever since. Mamie daily disproved the theories that, if you give a girl enough candy to eat she soon tires of it, that candy-shop girls do not care for sweets, and that sugar ruins the complexion. She nibbled at chocolates at intervals all day long, and, except that perhaps her cheeks were a bit pinker, her hair a trifle more blonde, she remained just the same.

To the mere buyer of candy, Mamie was one of the pretty, polite little girls in big white aprons who waited on you at the Busy Bee. To her acquaintances and the dwellers in Gillen Row she was old Joe Carpenter's girl, a reproach in itself—rather a wild piece. To Millersville, socially, she was, of course, nothing at all. She did not

exist to Millersville's smartest circle except as a purveyor of sweets. She was below even the least important members of the church societies, who occasionally got into the end paragraphs in Miss Drewsy's society column.

Mamie knew how Millersville felt about her, and her liking for Millersville was shaped accordingly. She especially disliked the "society girls," the ones who lived in Maple Road, because they had good times and did the sort of things she would like to have done. They could flirt and not get talked about. The girls in the Busy Bee looked up to them, whispered about them when they came in.

The rest of Millersville Mamie didn't mind, but she despised those girls with a keen, sharp, unbelievable hate. She was better-looking than any of them. She knew that. Society? Good blood? Family? What did they mean, in Millersville?

Mamie scorned Millersville's social pretensions. She knew that in some cities, London and New York, maybe, there was society, real people with generations of good blood back of them, and money and breeding. People like that Mamie could look up to. But she knew Millersville. In Millersville, what did society amount to? A joke; that's what it was. No one really came to anything, did anything.

The Elwood Simpsons, the leaders of Millersville society—look at them! There was a little grave in Oakdale Cemetery that Mamie knew all about—and it was closely connected with the girlhood of Mrs. Elwood Simpson—and there were other babies who did not die but who arrived at equally inopportune times. The Coakleys were

one of Millersville's oldest and best families—and Frank Coakley's half-brother spent most of his time in jail, and his other half-brother, Bill, was half-witted, went around with his tongue hanging out and saying silly things. The Binghams—ugh—they had to get their servants out of town, and sometimes at the last minute had to break engagements because some one in their third floor would cry and scream—their oldest daughter, some said it was.

Mamie knew other things about Millersville society. The rich Ruckers made their money getting land away from ignorant farmers. The Bilcamps made theirs selling fake oil stocks in Oklahoma. There was some sort of a misrun bank in the Grantly family. It wouldn't do to look too closely into the histories of any of them. Yet they were "society" and had a Country Club—and lots of good times.

Mamie knew she was as good as any of them—better than most. Her family had moved to Millersville from Lexington when she was thirteen. Her father had got into some sort of a scrape over a woman—or a girl—she had never known much about it, but anyhow, it was enough to make them move. Of course the news of it had seeped to Millersville, made the Carpenters a bit more outcast than they would have been, though they wouldn't have been anything, in any case, without money or connections.

Coming to Millersville hadn't made any difference to Mamie. The new house was just as unpleasant as the old. She had had just as good a time playing with the boys of the neighbourhood, catching on wagons for rides, in Millersville as in Lexington. She had liked Millers-

ville all right. She had gone to school rather unevenly, staying at home for frequent imaginary ills. But a sense of herself had kept her in school beyond the age of most of her friends.

It was in High School that she had first felt the social barriers of Millersville—and she had sneered at them even as they hurt her. The teachers had all been partial to the two stupid Redding girls, pale-haired, fat and awkward, because Samuel Redding was president of the school board. Their essays had been praised and read aloud in the class. Mamie had known that hers were quite as good and that she was just as clever—and much prettier. But nobody had ever praised or noticed her.

On Friday nights there had been parties, which "the crowd" attended. During the week, eating her lunches in the school lunch-room, echoes of the glories of the parties had reached her—how Marion Smith had let Harold Frederickson put his arm around her, how much salad Louis Bingham had eaten. There had been clubs at school, intimate things with secrets and pins and bows of coloured ribbon; there had been cryptic jokes handed from one member of the selected set to another, to be referred to, giggled over. But Mamie had been out of it all.

There had been other sets, less desirable, the church societies, smaller, less exclusive organizations. Mamie had not been welcomed to these, either, though by a great effort the daughter of old Joe Carpenter might have attained the least of them. She had not wanted to belong. She had not wanted to go with the "society set" of her age, either. It had been more than that. She had

wanted them to want *her*. But her father, a ne'er-do-well, had been run out of Lexington, her mother was a slovenly woman with wispy hair, and her home was a grey shamble in Gillen Row.

So Mamie, as she grew up, did not improve her social position. She remained old Joe Carpenter's girl, from Gillen Row.

III

But, if society did not recognize Mamie, the masculine element of it did, in a hidden, stealthy way.

Even when she had gone to High School the most desirable boys had offered her—secretly—invitations, moonlight drives—the best people of Millersville did not allow their daughters to drive after sundown with masculine escorts—and other forbidden pleasures. When she was younger Mamie accepted these invitations, but when she grew older and came to the Busy Bee to work, she learned how unpleasant they could be. Gradually, the men had ceased bothering about her. After all, she was only old Carpenter's daughter and not a good sport—no pep to her.

In the Busy Bee, too, had come invitations from the commercial travellers who hung around the Grand Hotel. Mamie accepted them for a while. She wanted a good time. She flirted and laughed, went for walks and drives. But finally she stopped going with the travelling men—refused their invitations altogether. She didn't know why—just no fun any more, nothing to it.

Not that these refusals helped her reputation in Millersville. A girl as pretty as Mamie and coming from such

a neighbourhood as Gillen Row and with Joe Carpenter as a father had no reputation to lose.

But when she quit "running around" it left her pretty much alone. She even refused the invitations of the girls who worked with her at the Busy Bee. Their homes were neater than hers. She couldn't return their invitations. Anyhow, she didn't care anything about them. Their beaux, decent clerks, annoyed her. Occasionally, lately, she had allowed Will Remmers, of the New York Store, to take her to some of Millersville's infrequent theatrical performances. She didn't care for Will Remmers, a stupid fellow who thought he was doing her a favour, but, at least, he was decent—some one to go with. She didn't care for any one especially. She had learned a lot about men, being pretty and meeting them since she was sixteen.

Mamie had tried to think of some way to get out of Millersville, but she never went far enough to plan anything definitely. The home in Gillen Row took all of her money; she could barely keep out enough to dress decently. She saw no future by the route of the drummers of the Grand Hotel. She had no profession or training. Really, she didn't dislike being in Millersville. If she could have been one of the society set she felt she would have liked it very well indeed. It was just her position that annoyed her—having nothing, no pretty things, being nothing—when girls like the Reddings had so much.

The Reddings especially annoyed Mamie.

There were two Redding girls: Sophie, the older, rather fat and white with colourless hair, and Esther, a bit more presentable, but a trifle more stupid, if any-

thing. The Redding girls giggled, holding their heads on one side. They tossed their light curls. They snuggled up to their young men. They were always coming into the Busy Bee, the head of a little group, laughing and chatting, selecting tables with great care, ordering elaborate sundaes or sodas. They always had new little tricks, new clothes. If they recognized Mamie as one of their old schoolmates, they gave no sign. They had each had a year at the Craig School, a second-rate boarding school that New York maintained for rich Westerners, and liked to forget that they had ever attended any other institution.

When Marlin Embury came into the Busy Bee to make a purchase, Mamie might have paid no attention to him at all if Rose Martin hadn't nudged her.

"That's William E. Embury's son," she said. "He's back in town. Do you know him? I read in the *Eagle* he's gone in with his father in business. He goes with Sophie Redding. They say he is going to marry her, though they haven't announced the engagement."

Mamie looked at Embury and liked him. That nice-looking fellow—for Sophie Redding! Not nearly as handsome as the man who had played in the stock company in Millersville the month before, but not bad-looking—didn't compare with Wallace Reid or John Barrymore, but then they were only on the screen—pictures as far as she was concerned, and married—she'd read that in a magazine—and Embury was right here.

She knew who Embury was, had seen him, years ago, before he went away to college, had sort of kept track of him through the papers. She had read, several months

before, that he was back in Millersville, after two years as manager of some of his father's oil wells in Oklahoma.

And now he was going with Sophie Redding! Good-looking and rich—the only son of rich parents—and Sophie Redding would get him! He had a good face, was young, couldn't be more than twenty-four. That young kind is easy—falls for anything. Mamie knew that. He had gone to a boys' preparatory school, then to a college that was not co-educational, then two years in a little town. Why he didn't know anything about girls. He'd be easy even for Sophie Redding to capture —Sophie, with her home, "Crestwood," out in Maple Road, her father, grey-haired and pompous, and her mother, fat and smiling—always giving parties—good times.

No wonder Sophie could get him, even if she was fat and white and silly! Sophie had everything. What chance had she against Sophie?

Until then it hadn't occurred to Mamie that she was entitled to a chance—that there was even the possibility of her and Sophie having aims in the same direction. And yet—

She looked at Embury.

He had bought a huge box of candy. It was being wrapped up for him. He was a nice boy with sleek black hair, not especially tall, but then she herself was small and didn't like tall men. He had nice shoulders, a slim figure, a good head, just a boy. Fat Sophie Redding, with her pale eyes and giggles—why, she *knew* she was prettier—smarter than Sophie! And yet—Sophie—!

Why not do something about it? *Do* something? Get Embury? Why not? Wasn't his father about the richest man in Millersville? Wasn't he the most eligible man in town, now that Bliss Bingham had gone to Chicago and Harold Richardson was married?

There were other men, of course, but either they were old bachelors who knew too much about her, old and snobbish, or poor or too young. Embury had already made good in Oklahoma. Now his father had taken him into business, wouldn't disinherit him—if he married her. Wasn't it rumoured that Mrs. Embury—stately and dignified enough now—had before her marriage "worked out"? She wouldn't dare object too strenuously to Joe Carpenter's daughter as her daughter-in-law.

After all, Mamie had always wondered if she could do something clever if she had a chance. Here was her chance—she'd never have a better one, she knew that. After all, no one would help her—all she had was herself. Maybe, if she tried hard enough . . .

Embury took his package and went out of the store. He had not noticed Mamie Carpenter.

## IV

Embury was glad to get home again. He thought Millersville a jolly place to live in after Sorgo, Oklahoma, with its constant smell and feel of oil. He enjoyed his old room again and the new car and being with the crowd.

He was not an especially brilliant fellow, nor a rapid thinker, nor much of a reader. He liked a good time, in a quiet way. He wore good clothes and liked to be

with others who did. He thought girls were awfully jolly, but hard to get acquainted with. He found the girls in Millersville unusually pleasant. But, of course, that was as it should be; they were home-town girls.

Sophie Redding—she was jolly and cute and had a way of making him feel awfully at home. It was pleasant at the Reddings, sitting out on the big porch and drinking lemonade, with Sophie ready to laugh at his jokes and some of the others of the crowd likely to drop in at any time. Yes, Sophie was a pretty fine girl. His folks liked her, too, always awfully glad when he called on her, kept telling him what a fine girl she was and how much they liked the family. Now, if he showed her a good time all summer and autumn, did all he could for her, maybe Sophie would care for him.

Embury was driving down Hill Street four or five days later when a pretty girl nodded to him, just a formal, pleasant little nod.

Embury couldn't place her, exactly, but he spoke, of course. He even took his eyes off the road ahead long enough to glance back at her. She was pretty, and he liked little girls who wore plain blue dresses in summer. Some one, probably, he'd met out at the Country Club and didn't remember. Still, she seemed prettier than most of the girls he had met there. Maybe some one he used to know. He tried to conjure up a childhood acquaintance who might have blossomed into this little blonde girl, but he couldn't. Anyhow, she was pretty.

Two weeks later, walking up Elm Street after leaving the office—he frequently walked home and always went that way when he did—the same little figure overtook

him, passed ahead. His heart palpitated quite pleasantly. But this time the nod was even cooler, more formal. He returned it as cordially as he could. That night there was a dance at the club and Embury watched each new arrival, but there was no pretty little blonde with big eyes and radiant hair. Sophie found him preoccupied and told him so. He tried his best to be more courteous to her. After all, why worry about a strange girl? You couldn't tell who she might turn out to be.

He saw her again, a week later, when he was driving. Again he received a cool little nod. He'd ask some of the boys about her—she might be good fun—evidently wasn't one of the crowd. Millersville was a slow place, not much to do, a little affair on the side—by another year he might be married and settled down—might as well have a good time while he could.

He didn't have to ask any of the boys, for the very next day, on Elm Street, the little figure in blue held out her hand as he overtook her.

"I don't believe you know me," she laughed prettily, shyly. "You've looked—so amazed, when I've spoken. Don't tell me your years out of town have made you forget old acquaintances altogether. I'm Mamie Carpenter."

"Why, of course, Miss Carpenter, I'm delighted," he stammered.

"Oh, I'm so ashamed," she said, then hurriedly, with embarrassed little pauses between the words: "Here, I've stopped you to tell you how—how glad Millersville is to have you back—and—I'm afraid you don't remember me, after all. I don't blame you—I was such a little girl

when you left—and I'm not—important. But I remember when I went to Grant School, and you were in High, I used to stop every day and watch you practise football. You wore a red sweater, I remember. You—you were one of my youthful heroes, you see."

He thought, then, that he did remember her, and said so. Little girls change—he knew that. It was pleasant for him to think that, after all these years, she remembered him. He had worn a red sweater—still, wasn't the school colour red; hadn't all the other boys worn them, too? Well, anyhow, he had played football. No one else had said anything about those days. How pretty she was—a wonderful complexion! Why, in comparison, it made Sophie's seem almost pasty. Of course, Sophie was a Redding—that was different—a serious thing, a bully girl, too. Mamie—he liked the name—it was like her, simple, plain, pretty. She might be great fun. To think of her remembering him all these years! What a plain little dress she wore! Poor people, evidently. Oh, well—

Two weeks later, in Elm Street—it was a quiet street, tree-lined—he met Mamie again. She was walking ahead of him, as he turned up from Hill. He caught up with her.

"You live near here?" he asked.

She told him, very seriously, that she lived in Gillen Row and that her parents were awfully poor.

"I—I work, you know—in the Busy Bee, the candy store. It makes things a little easier for mother—and my father. I stopped school before my junior year—to —to help them. Of course I've kept up with reading—

but—I didn't mind stopping—my father had an accident and they needed me. It isn't bad—it's rather pleasant at the Busy Bee—interesting to watch people."

"I'm sure you're the sweetest thing there," said Embury, and was surprised at his own boldness and a bit ashamed when he saw how Mamie blushed and dropped her eyes. What a dear little thing she was, leaving school to help her folks and not even complaining about it—and not ashamed, either, didn't try to conceal it. It never occurred to him that he probably would have seen her in the Busy Bee any day and so discovered her position for himself.

"You always walk home in Elm Street?" he asked, to cover her confusion—she was still blushing.

"Yes, it's so quiet and peaceful, the trees and all."

"That's funny. That's why *I* go this way, when I don't take the car to the office."

"You do?" Mamie showed great surprise. "Isn't it funny, our tastes in streets?"

Perhaps even more remarkable, if she had mentioned it, would have been the fact that Mamie had never honoured Elm Street with her presence until—investigating by little scurries after leaving the shop in the evening—she had found that Embury usually chose it when walking home.

## V

Two days later, Embury walked up Elm Street with Mamie again. He had looked for her the day before, and had been disappointed when he did not see her. Hadn't she said she walked there every day?

"I didn't see you yesterday," he said with a smile, as he joined her.

Mamie explained—not the real fact, that she had taken her old route home so as not to appear too eager for his acquaintance—but that she had gone a shorter way so that she could hurry home to cook dinner—her mother wasn't well.

"Poor little girl," thought Embury, "working all day and then cooking dinner at night, too."

"I missed you," he said.

Mamie blushed again. She was rather good at it. Many people are.

"Are you going to stay here in Millersville?" Mamie asked.

No use getting excited, working hard over him, if he wasn't. Embury was the first real opportunity she had had—if she could only get him before the others poisoned his mind against her or before the Reddings made his escape impossible—if he were going to leave Millersville, there wouldn't be any use bothering about him.

Embury told her that he was to stay in town, and she showed pleasure and blushed again. She asked him about his work and his plans.

To his surprise, Embury found himself telling her about himself. Here was a girl, intelligent, interesting. The other girls didn't know anything about business. But, of course, thrown on her own resources as she had been, she'd learned to take a real interest in the business world.

They walked together until a block before the street down which Embury usually turned.

"I go this way," said Mamie.

She could have continued on Elm Street, but she thought it best to be the first to break their walk together.

"Wait a minute; don't go away so quickly," said Embury.

He felt as if he were on a delightful adventure.

Quietly, Mamie waited.

"When am I going to see you again?" he asked.

She started to say something, blushed then; "Why, I don't know—I mean, any evening, walking home this way. I'm at the Busy Bee all day, you know."

"At night. Can't I call? Can't you go for a drive?"

Mamie knew how her home would look to Embury, the porch with its sagging floor, the living-room with its clutter of ugly chairs, her parents quarrelling, more than likely. She couldn't receive him at home. It didn't seem fair—she had to fight against so many odds—and Sophie Redding had the whole Redding home, with its great porches, its big living rooms for entertaining. How she hated Sophie Redding with her giggles, her light stringy hair. Still, if she were smart enough—there might be ways . . .

"I'm afraid I can't let you call at all," she said, modestly. "You see, I'm not one of the society girls. It—it wouldn't look right, I'm afraid. You know how—how careful a girl has got to be."

What a dear little thing she was! Modest and shy and good. Each second Embury felt himself more and more a man of the world. This little thing, so fragile and dainty—and awfully pretty. Of course she was right. People would talk—and yet . . .

He didn't know that Millersville would not talk about Mamie, no matter how many men called on her, that they had talked when she was a little girl and dismissed her, carelessly, as "Joe Carpenter's daughter, a bad egg." Mamie knew. It didn't make her feel any happier. Still, this was no time to worry about it.

"Couldn't we go for a ride some evening?" he asked. "No one would see us, honestly they wouldn't."

"I really couldn't. Really. You know how it is. I'd love to—but—it wouldn't be right. I can't go."

She appeared to want to yield to him. She knew how society in Millersville regarded girls who went automobiling with young men, alone. Embury would find out, if he didn't know already, and his opinions would be moulded by the others.

"You're the funniest girl I ever saw," he smiled at her.

She was just small enough so that he looked down into her face when he stood close to her. Embury liked little girls. He was glad Mamie was small.

"Other girls would go with me, honestly they would."

"You'd better take them, then," she pouted, prettily.

"I don't mean that. I don't want to sound conceited. Only I would like to take you, honestly I would. I know a little road house, 'Under Two Flags,' where they make awfully good things to eat, French cooking. We could ride out there some night, if you'll go."

Mamie knew the road house. She used to think it great fun. She had slapped the faces of six commercial travellers driving home from it and finally had given it up as a dangerous place. It was, nevertheless, a fairly decent resort, with only a slightly sporty reputation, but,

after all, the ride there and the supper weren't worth the trouble of keeping her escort in his place all the way back. Why did men expect such big rewards for a ride and a bite to eat?

Mamie smiled wistfully.

"I'm afraid not," she said. "I wish you wouldn't—tempt me so. You see, I never go driving—I—I don't have many good times."

Embury's conscience hurt him. She was such a dear. Of course she shouldn't go. He felt more wicked than ever.

"But look here," he said, "can't I see you at all?"

Mamie was thoughtful.

"I don't know," she said; then, "next Friday I have a holiday—I work every second Sunday, the Busy Bee is open on Sundays too."

Embury was supposed to be at the office every day but he knew he was not indispensable.

"Fine," he told her, "that's awfully good. Can we go in my car and make a picnic of it?"

Mamie thought that would be a lot of fun. They made plans for the meeting. That was Wednesday. On Thursday, Mamie avoided Elm Street.

## VI

Friday she was a few minutes late. She had appointed the corner of Elm and East streets as the meeting place. From a distance she saw Embury's car waiting at the curb near the corner. He sprang out when he saw her.

"This is jolly," he said.

She looked charming and she knew it. She had on a thin little dress of white, flecked with little rosebuds. It was plain and not new, but very fresh. A floppy leghorn hat was tied under her chin with a pale pink and yellow ribbon. She had trimmed the hat, herself, after a picture she had seen in a copy of Vogue that some one had left in the Busy Bee. She knew it suited her. The night before she had had a quarrel with her father because she had not "turned in" enough money. She had purchased a tiny bottle of her favourite perfume, rather an expensive brand.

It was a perfect day, not too warm nor too sunny. Mamie did not snuggle close, as she felt Sophie would have done. She did not talk too much. But she took off her hat and let the wind blow her hair back—she had washed it the night before and it blew in soft waves. She sat near enough for Embury to smell the perfume of it.

They drove to a small near-by town where Embury attended to some business his father had asked him to look after the week before. At noon he suggested eating in the town's one hotel. Mamie shuddered prettily, then had an idea.

"Can't we have a picnic—a real out-of-doors picnic?" she begged. "I'm shut away from the sunshine so much of the time."

Embury thought the idea delightful. With much laughter, they bought things at the little stores, bread and pickles and olives, tinned meats and cakes and a piece of ice in a bucket and lemons and sugar for lemon-

ade. They rode, then, until a bit of woods attracted them. They soon had the improvised luncheon spread out under a tree.

Embury was surprised at his enjoyment. He watched Mamie's little white hands arranging the things to eat. He tramped to a near-by farm for water and returned with an extra pail containing fresh, cool milk. It all seemed decidedly pure and rural to him. The food tasted remarkably good and, when they had finished, he leaned against a tree and smoked, smiled as he looked at Mamie, still cool in the sprigged lawn.

"Having a good time?" he asked.

"Wonderful," she told him, "this is the best time I've ever had, I think. It's different. You're not like the other men I've known. I can—talk with you, tell you things. This seems sort of—of a magic day."

Embury thought so, too. He told her so. He told her other things, about his business, his thoughts, what he was going to do. Finally, he was telling her about his two years in Oklahoma.

"That was prison," he said. "It was smoky and oily —you could feel the oil, taste it in your food. It hung over you, all day, like a cloud. Still, it was worth going through—for this."

"You are—nice," said Mamie, very softly.

"Let's keep this day for a secret," she said. "Just the two of us will know about it. Let's keep all of our times together as secrets—if we ever see each other again."

Embury agreed that secrets were very nice things to have.

They were silent for a while.

Finally, he got up, walked over to her. Mamie got to her feet, too. He came close and put his hand on her shoulder, started to put his arms around her.

"You're a dear little girl," he said.

Mamie lifted big eyes to him.

"Please don't," she moved away, ever so slightly. "Please let me keep today perfect—as a memory. We —may never see each other again. I want to remember today as it is now. I—"

She broke off, embarrassed. Embury felt suddenly bad, ashamed. How innocent she was! If he were going to be a man of the world, he'd have to think of another way. He couldn't break the silken wings of her innocence by spoiling her day—her perfect day—she worked so hard and was so good. It had been a pleasant day for him, too. Later—he could see her other times, of course.

"I wanted to make the day more beautiful," he said, but he did not try to touch her again.

They rode home almost in silence. When she told him good-bye, in Elm Street, she let her hand lie in his a moment. How small it seemed. Why, actually, it trembled.

"When am I going to see you again?" he asked.

"I don't know," said Mamie. Then, "I walk up Elm Street every day, you know. I—I had a wonderful time." She smiled a bit sadly, and was gone.

That night there was a party at the Country Club and Embury took Sophie Redding.

For the first time since he knew her he noticed how fat her hands were, a trifle red, too—and how she took

possession of him, as if they were already married—and he'd never proposed to her. She giggled too much. It made him nervous. He knew a dainty, pretty girl, a simple little girl, who didn't go to Country Club dances nor roll her eyes nor put her hands on fellows' shoulders. Of course, Sophie was the sort of girl that a fellow married—position and all that—his mother kept hinting things—what a fine family the Reddings were, what a nice wife Sophie would make . . .

Still, he was young yet. Too young to settle down. He'd have his fling first, anyhow.

For five days Embury walked home on Elm Street. He did not see Mamie. On the sixth day he went into the Busy Bee. There she was, the blonde hair more golden and beautiful than ever. She smiled a quick greeting at him. He had been afraid to go in, ashamed almost. What if it would embarrass her—what if she didn't want to see him? Of course, he wasn't going in to see her—he really had a purchase to make, still . . .

Should he let her wait on him or get some one else? He saw her speak to another girl. Then she walked back of the counter to meet him.

"Hello," she said, very low, but gaily.

"How have you been?" he asked. "I haven't seen you for days."

She laughed.

"It's good of you to bother. My mother has been ill again. I wasn't down at all yesterday. You wanted to buy some candy? May—I wait on you?"

She was so modest, didn't think he had come in es-

pecially to see her. He bought a box of chocolates and took it away under his arm.

That evening he met her in Elm Street.

"The candy is for you," he told her.

She accepted it, with as seeming a gratitude as if she didn't get all the candy she could eat all day long.

"You bought my favourite chocolates," she told him. "I wondered—"

She broke off, blushing.

"Whom they were for?"

"I—I mean I didn't think they were for me. You know how girls in—in stores gossip. I heard—some one said that you were attentive to—I mean that you liked —some one here in Millersville."

"I do," said Embury boldly, and caught her eye.

She blushed again, prettily.

"It was Miss Redding they meant," she said.

So—people were saying things about him and Sophie Redding. Embury didn't like it. He was too young to get married. He felt that. That's the trouble with a small town, no sooner you start going with a girl than the town has you engaged and married. Mrs. Redding, too—she was being too nice to him—too affectionate.

"Miss Redding is an awfully nice girl," he told her. "We've been to a few parties together, but that's all. You know how Millersville is."

"I know. I went to High School with the Redding girls. They're just a few years older than I am. I'm sorry I said anything. I guess I just listened to gossip. You know how you hear things. Just to show

how wrong people can be—why, what I heard was that —that Miss Redding herself had said that you were—were going together. Millersville is awfully gossipy, isn't it?"

So, Sophie had been talking about his going with her. But it was just the thing she would do. A few weeks ago he had felt that if he could win Sophie it would be a very desirable thing. But lately he'd been annoyed at her. She'd shown him too many attentions—or too many pointed slights to pique him. He felt himself falling into a sort of net she was spreading. Why, even this little girl, so far away from the set in which Sophie moved, had heard things. He'd be careful—he wasn't engaged to Sophie, yet.

He admitted that Millersville was gossipy but that there was "nothing to" the gossip about him. He and Mamie had a pleasant walk up Elm Street.

After that, for several weeks, he met Mamie every day. He tried to make other engagements, but she wouldn't go for picnics or drives, even on her days off. She told Embury that she had to help her mother, who wasn't strong and needed her. But she consented to the evening walks home.

How sweet and simple she was, Embury felt. Other girls would have playfully avoided him, teased him, tried to make him more eager by their indifference. Mamie was always admittedly glad to be with him. Excepting when she had to hurry home a shorter way, she was always walking up the street when he overtook her. He began to look forward to these little walks, down the quiet, tree-shaded way. Mamie, on the warmest days

seemed to remain cool and fresh-looking, her blonde hair soft and fluffy. In the shade she would take off her hat and turn her face up to catch any stray breeze. She'd have jolly little stories to tell him and be interested in everything that he was doing.

Walking next to her he could watch the soft curve of her body, smell the pleasant fragrance of the perfume she used. Later, when he was alone, he contrasted her; gentle of voice, sweet, simple, sensible; with Sophie and Esther, the other girls of the crowd, their giggles and affectations, their attempts at intimacies, pressing close to him while they danced, overheated after dancing, their hair moist, their voices loud, their behaviour foolish. This little girl had more refinement than any of them—knew how to keep her self-respect, too. These walks were the pleasantest part of his day.

Then, one evening Mamie was standing at the corner of Elm and East Street waiting for him, her eyes wide and frightened. From a distance he had seen her dainty figure, the plain straw hat, the simple frock.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

"It's really nothing," she said, but her eyes held tears.

"Tell me. Is it serious?"

"It's nothing. That is, you'll think it's nothing at all. I—I can't tell you. It—spoils things—our little walks, our pleasant friendship."

"What do you mean?"

"It's awful—Millersville. I hate it—People misunderstand. I'm poor, you know—and work. It's so easy for people to talk about a girl in my position. And some one told my—my father that I meet you every

evening. He—he grew awfully angry. You don't know my father—he has a terrible temper. I—I can't ever meet you any more. That's all."

She wiped her eyes carefully, with her small handkerchief. "Of course—it's nothing to you, but it's meant so much—I'm silly, I guess, but it's been the pleasant part of—of my life." She sniffled, very gently.

"My dear, my dear," Embury was moved. He wanted to take her into his arms. Such a little girl—talked about—because she went walking with him! He danced with other girls, put his arms around them on porches, kissed them, even. And this little girl, walked with him—and even that was denied her.

Suddenly, it came to him how much the walks meant—how much Mamie meant to him. Each day he told her everything he had done, talked over his small business difficulties with her. She was always asking such sensible, thoughtful questions about things. None of the other girls cared—all they cared was that he was old man Embury's son—good as an escort—or to bring candy or flowers. He had never taken Mamie any place, nor spent money on her. She seemed apart from things—their little walks up the quiet street seemed to belong to another world.

"It's nonsense," he said. "I won't stand it. It's ridiculous. Of course we can keep on seeing each other."

"I'm afraid not," her voice was unsteady.

"But we must. Don't you care?"

"I—I—told you—I don't dare think how lonely I'll be. Thinking about our talks has helped me all day long."

Mamie wouldn't let Embury call on her, either. Not

just yet—maybe later, when her father was no longer angry. She didn't dare disobey him, he was rather cross, almost cruel to her.

They walked the rest of the way in silence. At her street Mamie held out her hand and Embury took it and held it. It seemed a very solemn occasion.

Mamie's expression was not so sad as she turned down the side street. It was decidedly pleasant and smiling. It might have puzzled Embury if he had seen it, but not more than the conversation would have puzzled Joe Carpenter. For, not since Mamie was ten had her father tried to give her advice concerning her associates. No one ever came to him with tales of Mamie and he had never even heard that the rich Mr. Embury had a son.

## VII

For weeks, then, Embury didn't see Mamie. At first he dismissed the whole thing with a careless, "Well, that little affair is over," a slight disappointment that Mamie hadn't been a better sport. It was just as well—Some one had told his parents, too, and they had questioned him, rather teasingly, about the companion of his evening walks. But they had been serious, at that. They didn't want him to get "mixed up" with any one.

Then he began to miss Mamie, miss the chance to talk about himself, miss her soft femininity. To put her out of his mind he devoted himself more thoroughly to Sophie.

After all, she was the girl for him, one of the Redding girls, one of his own class. But when he talked to her

he couldn't help comparing her to Mamie, whom he felt he knew very well. Mamie was fresh and wholesome and innocent. She never went to parties or dances, things like that. Sophie was full of little tricks, liked to say things with double meanings—and giggle. If the girls had been changed around—Sophie in Mamie's place—he couldn't quite understand it.

Sophie became too affectionate when he was with her, begged to light his cigarettes, always putting her hands on his shoulders, pinching his arm when anything exciting happened—and then pretending she hadn't meant to do it. She was an awfully nice girl, of course. But she so definitely pursued him. He got tired of hearing her praises sung at home, too. Her tricks of breaking engagements, pretending indifference—they were worse than her affectionate moods. Her hair was colourless, her eyes too light. Compared with Mamie . . .

As the days passed he missed Mamie more and more. He hated himself for his stupidity—he found himself passing the Busy Bee on all possible occasions, looking into the windows, over the display of assorted candy, into the store. Sometimes, above the counters, he'd see her, in her crisp white apron, her blonde, radiant hair framing her lovely little face. She was always busy, always cheerful. Other girls wasted their lives having good times. Mamie worked on, day after day—gentle, good. Sometimes Embury thought her face looked serious, a bit sad. Did she miss him?

Finally he couldn't stand it any longer. He cursed himself for his silliness—he went into the Busy Bee, bought some candy. He had promised himself he

wouldn't annoy her—she was right—it was better that they shouldn't see each other any more. Yet he was shedding the dignity of an Embury, acting the mere oaf, hanging around a candy store hoping for a smile from a salesgirl. He should have known better, scorned such behaviour. But there he was.

Mamie was busy. He waited—some one called to her and she went into the back of the shop. He felt like a fool—didn't dare ask for her. He bought his candy and went out. Next day he passed the shop three times. The day after he went inside again. He watched Mamie's slim fingers flying among the candy trays, putting chocolates into a box for a customer. How he loved her hands. They were too fine for such work. Why—he did love her—of course—that was it—he loved her—no use denying it.

He looked at her—her lovely profile, her fair complexion. She turned—smiled at him, rather a sad little smile—and went on packing chocolates, an adorable colour surging over her face. She had to pack chocolates—his girl! He loved her—and couldn't even walk down the street with her. He made a purchase and went out, hating himself the rest of the day.

He took the candy out to the Reddings that evening. Ten or twelve of the crowd were there. They turned on the Victrola and danced, then had lemonade. Every one was in high spirits. Some one suggested a short drive to cool off after dancing, so they all piled into the cars that stood waiting for them along Maple Road. Embury drove his car and Sophie sat next to him.

"Propose to her," something told him. "Go on, get

definitely attached, have it over with. Then you'll be settled, nothing to worry about. No use thinking about Mamie—you can't marry her."

But he couldn't propose, then nor later, when he was alone with her. Sophie chattered. The soft, pleasant night seemed marred. He thought of Mamie, their one ride together. He was sick of Sophie, of her tricks, her silliness, his parents' praise of her. He wanted Mamie.

He thought of Mamie before he fell asleep that night. He did love her. He knew that. But he couldn't marry her. Of course not. If he did, though, his father would be horribly disappointed. But he'd get over it—and his mother, too. It wasn't that. Mamie was far prettier and sweeter than any girl in the crowd. But she didn't belong—it was just that she lived in Gillen Row. The crowd would laugh at him.

What if they did laugh? Oh, well, it was something. He didn't want to hurt his future. Mamie was in another set—another world—that was all. He couldn't marry her. Still—he could see her. There were other things beside marriage. He had to have his fling. He hadn't had any affairs. He was still young. Here was an affair, that was all. After that—you can settle such things with money—there was time enough for marriage, then—with Sophie, of course.

He woke up feeling quite the conquering hero, as if he had already taken definite steps in his approach on Mamie. She was a dear, a little innocent. He was a college man, a man of the world. Of course she was no match for him. Still—he'd be a fool not to follow

the thing up—she was too pretty to leave—if not him, some one else then. Why not him?

At noon, when he left the office in his car, he drove up Gillen Row. What a street? There had been no rain for days—everything was covered with grey dust. There was a horrible sense of rust and decay and dirtiness. He didn't know which house was Mamie's, but they all looked alike in the sunshine, a squalid, ramshackle row,—how different from his own home—from the Redding home, with their terraced lawns, their pleasant green bushes and flowers. This was a different life from the life he led, from the pleasant, comfortable ways of his people. And yet—Mamie—

VIII

At half-past five he went into the Busy Bee. Mamie was not busy. She was standing near a glass counter, listlessly leaning one elbow against it. She looked pale, he thought, and yet dainty—dainty and sweet, and she'd come out of Gillen Row. It had been a hot summer. He was glad September was here.

She smiled as she saw him. How little she was! Hadn't she missed him at all? She had cared a little for him—he felt that. He could make her care again, if she'd give him a chance.

"I must see you," he told her.

She looked around, rather frightened. He had forgotten that she had to be careful about her position—that she actually was forced to sell candy in the Busy Bee.

"Don't you want to see me?" he added.

"Of course."

"You won't meet me in Elm Street?"

"I don't dare. I told you. You don't understand—I—can't meet you."

"May I come to see you?"

"I—I told you—"

"But I *must* see you. Let me call."

"I don't—well, all right then, if you want to come. I shouldn't let you. My father—still, if you want to. I live way down in Gillen Row. We are—are very poor, you know. If you want—"

"Of course I do. Why didn't you let me come, before? May I come right away, tonight?"

She nodded.

"Where do you live?"

"The third house after Birch Street, Number 530. It's a little cottage."

"Go driving with me?"

"I—I told you I couldn't—at night—and I never have time, other times."

"Tonight then, about eight. How's that?"

Mamie nodded again, smiled. Embury bought a box of candy to cover his embarrassment.

Going into a candy shop to make an engagement with a shopgirl—trembling when she spoke to him, grinning and ogling over the counter! He had never thought himself capable of that.

As he ate his dinner the engagement became something vastly important, a bit different, a bit devilish. He'd take her out in his car. Of course. It would be a moonlight night. He understood girls. A simple girl like that—

IX

A few minutes before eight he drove up to the cottage where Mamie lived. It was even more terrible than he had imagined it, a crooked little cottage with a funny, sagging porch, the paint peeled off, the lumber turned grey. There had been no attempt to beautify the small grey yard.

As he stepped out of the car Mamie came out on the porch, walked hurriedly toward him. She had on pink, a thin, delicate pink, made very plain. Her complexion looked quite pale, her hair softer and brighter than ever.

She came up to him, put her hand on his arm, drew it back again. The gesture that had been affectation with Sophie became genuine embarrassment here.

"You—can't—call," she said nervously. "I told father at dinner. He's just stepped out. He'd get furious—if he found you here. He—he keeps on harping on what that man told him—about my being seen with you—he says—I'm not in your class—that you don't mean—aren't—that I shouldn't go with you."

He saw that she was trembling. How soft she was and little. He wouldn't be cheated out of a ride with her—this evening—hadn't seen her for a long, long time. How he'd missed her!

"Jump in the car," he said. "Hurry up, before your father gets back. He'll never know."

"I can't. You don't know how angry he'd be. Girls don't ride at night, in Millersville, this way. It will make things worse."

She drew back.

"You don't want to go?"

"Oh, I do, I do! You don't know how much."

"Then jump in."

"It wouldn't be right. You wouldn't respect me. Other girls—"

"My dear child, you don't know the world. Other girls go driving at night—and do worse things than that. Only night before last I took a girl out driving—Sophie Redding—Miss Redding and I—"

"I know, but she's—you know—I told you what I heard."

"There's no truth in that. I told you so. Now come on, be a nice girl, jump in. It's too perfect an evening to waste. We'll drive down Rock Road. No one will see us."

"I don't know—I—"

"Please come. You'll please me, won't you?"

He felt bold, masterful, put his hand on her arm. He saw that he had done the wrong thing, been too hasty. She drew away, frightened.

"I—maybe—I'd better not see you any more, ever. That's what I'd planned—"

"Please come on, won't you, dear? Don't talk like that. Come on."

He let his voice grow tender—he was surprised to find how much he meant the tenderness. What if she wouldn't go?

She hesitated a moment, then:

"All right," she nodded, and jumped into the car.

She had ordered her parents to keep away from the

front of the house, but she knew them. She was eager to get away before they peered out of the window or slouched out on the porch.

They left Gillen Row and were soon out in the country.

Mamie sighed, a pleasant sigh of happiness.

"I suppose I oughtn't to be here," she said. "It's wrong, I know, but it seems right when I'm with you. I've been so lonely lately. It seems wonderful."

"You've missed me a little, then?"

"Missed you—of course."

The moon came out. They drove along the Sulpulpa River, and the moon rippled a path on the water. Embury stopped the car.

"This is great, isn't it?" he asked.

"Wonderful. I almost lose my breath at it. I'm that way about scenery—I can't say much. And to be here, now—"

He looked at her. She seemed almost ethereal in the moonlight, the pale pink of her dress, the soft gleam of her hair.

He put his arm around her, very gently, drew her close to him, held up her chin, looked at her. She was lovely, her fragrant, soft complexion, her big eyes. He kissed her.

She gave a little gasp. But there was no pulling away, none of the "how-dare-yous" which he had feared. As simply as a child she put her arms around his neck, kissed him, gave little whispers of contentment.

"You dear, you dear!" Embury whispered over and over again.

Then she drew away from him, turned her back, broke into a paroxysm of sobbing.

"What's the matter?" Embury asked, genuinely perplexed.

He hadn't quite understood her kissing him, though the kisses had been very pleasant. He understood her now least of all.

"I—I shouldn't have come with you," she sobbed. "Don't you see—I—I—let you kiss me—I kissed you—I wanted to kiss you—I'm as much to blame as you—more. It's wrong. I shouldn't have come with you—now, you can't respect me any more. After this you'll think—"

"Now, now," he soothed, "don't carry on this way. Honest, it's all right. It really is. Of course I respect you, honey. You're the dearest girl I know. Why—I—love you!"

He stumbled over the word—he had never told a girl that he loved her, before. He was quite sincere, now. Marriage—of course that was different. He knew that. But this little girl—she was a dear—lovely, as she lay in his arms, soft and yielding, her lips against his. Still, now he wanted her to stop crying—he had made her cry—

"Why, dear, kisses aren't anything, really. Lots of girls— You don't know the ways of the world, that's all. Now, cheer up—I didn't mean to frighten you."

"It—it was all my fault. I shouldn't have come. Of course, when I came, you thought—and I—I *wanted* to kiss you. That's the worst of it. Only—I did want to come—I never have anything. I'm—only nothing at all

—and live in Gillen Row and you're Marlin Embury—and now—I've kissed you."

He drove her home. All the way home she sobbed softly. There was a light in the little cottage.

"Don't drive me to the house," she said. "Father's home—it's late—if he saw you—I don't know what he'd do. I'll be all right—if I go in alone. My mother will be waiting, too. She'll keep him from being too angry—if I explain to her. I—I think she'll understand."

He let her out at the corner, pressing her hand as he told her good-bye.

"Now don't you worry," he said. "I'll see you to-morrow, dear. A kiss is nothing to worry over, really it isn't."

She watched his car as he drove away, sent a tiny little wave of farewell to him as he looked back.

Her mother had gone to bed. Her father was playing cards with three cronies in the dining-room.

"That's right, come trailing in at all hours—running around with some one else—got some one new?" he growled, as she passed them.

"That's my business," she answered curtly.

Her father might have detected a new tone in her voice if he hadn't been too busy seeing that he got the best of his friends before they took advantage of him.

## X

Embury worried about the kisses pretty much that night after he got home.

After all, Mamie was such a little thing and awfully young, not more than eighteen, probably, and not worldly,

sophisticated, like the girls he went with. He oughtn't to have—well, taken advantage of her. She had said she would never see him again—and then, after he had said he'd see her tomorrow, he had seen her wave farewell. If he didn't see her—perhaps that would be best, after all. Still,—her kisses were sweet—she was a dear—he remembered the touch of her soft lips.

In the morning Embury still thought only of Mamie's arms around his neck, her kisses. Of course he'd see her again. Why, he loved her. She was smarter, prettier, than Sophie. Sophie wouldn't have cried had he kissed her—she would have thought he had proposed and put their engagement in the papers. She probably thought they were even now. Wouldn't it be a joke on Sophie if he didn't marry her, after all? His parents—why should they rule his life?

Of course, marrying Mamie was out of the question—still, with pretty clothes, she'd beat any girl in Millersville on looks and brains. Why, she had them beat already. Hadn't she gone to High School until she had to stop to help out at home? Working every day, selling candy, luxuries—to others. Dear little thing—and now she was probably worrying because he had kissed her. Of course he'd see her—keep on seeing her . . .

At ten o'clock he peered into the windows of the Busy Bee. Mamie was not there. At eleven he looked in again. He went to the office and attempted to work. He looked into the shop windows both going to and coming from luncheon. He couldn't keep his mind on what he was trying to do in the afternoon. Before three, he left for the day and went to the Busy Bee, looked in,

went inside. It was almost a relief not to see Mamie—a relief, and yet it worried him.

A brown-haired girl he had never seen asked for his order. Embarrassed, he told her he wanted to speak to Miss Carpenter. What a fool he was. What else could he do?

Miss Carpenter hadn't been down all day—no, she didn't know what was the matter. Something she could do for him? Mechanically he ordered a box of candy.

He was glad he hadn't found Mamie there. After last night he didn't like to think of her clerking—waiting on people. He'd take her away—some place. Where? That was it—take her away. Still, he had to stay in Millersville—a town like Millersville! And she—why she cried when he kissed her—she was such a fragile, dainty little thing—like a lily—that was it—a lily, who had grown up in the muck of Gillen Row. Even too dainty for him. She wasn't at the store. What was the matter? What if—

He drove to Gillen Row as rapidly as he could, stopped his car in front of the forlorn cottage. What if her father was at home? Well, he could manage him—must manage him.

He ran up the front walk, up the broken steps, knocked at the door—the bell seemed out of order. He waited. No answer. He couldn't believe that the house was empty. He would wait. He stood on the porch, hesitating, wondering what to do. Then the door opened. It was Mamie.

She had on a blue suit, a plain little suit, with a white collar and a little black hat, turned up all around. He

had never seen her except in summer things. How well she looked, with her bright hair showing below the hat-brim.

"You shouldn't have come here," she said. "You mustn't come. Go away—I never—was going to see you again."

"What's the matter? You aren't ill? You weren't at the Busy Bee?"

"I'm not going back again, ever. I—I can't stand it."

"What are you going to do, Mamie?"

She looked so little and tragic.

"Last night father was waiting for me when I got home. You don't know my father. He's cruel, brutal, sometimes. He seemed to know, before I told him—that I'd been driving with you. So—I'm going away—I can't stand—this—any more."

"Going—where?"

He came inside, closed the door. What a mean little house it was.

"I don't know. Away from this—any place. I've enough money to get to—to Giffordsville. I can find something to do there. I've got to have peace and contentment—something. And you must hate me—after I kissed you last night. You can't care for me—respect me—and your respect was all I had."

"My dear, my dear little girl. Why, I—I—"

His arms were around her again. But this time she did not meet his lips with hers. She dropped her head, struggled a little, then sighed.

"You see," she said, "I can't struggle against you. I

must go away. I can't stand it—any longer. This house, everything—and now—"

"Mamie."

"Yes?"

"Look at me."

"I can't."

He forced her face upward.

"Do you love me?"

"Don't ask me to say it. You—know. Please don't be cruel to me. Let me go while I can."

"Cruel to you? Mamie, I love you. You know that. You mustn't go away from Millersville."

"I *must* go. After the quarrel with father, I can't stay here. That's settled."

"You *mustn't* go."

He repeated it over and over. He couldn't let her go. Without her, Millersville would be worse than oil-soaked Oklahoma. He dared not imagine it, even.

"I'm going now—I'm all ready for travelling. How can anything stop me?" She pointed to a little packed bag.

In his arms she was fragrant, sweet. How could she get along—what could she do, alone in the world? Why—she was his girl—he could take care of her. She understood him—his family—he wouldn't let his parents ruin his life.

Marry her, of course. Wasn't she better, nobler than the rest of the girls—a cruel father who misunderstood her—alone in the world, really—little and sweet and dear. Going away? Why, if he married her he could keep her here. Of course.

"I'm glad you're ready," he said, "because you're going with me."

"What—what do you mean?"

She drew away.

"What could I mean? We—we love each other. We can drive right down to the court-house this minute. You—you won't mind—marrying me, will you?"

She snuggled close to him and hid her head. From the sounds she made, he couldn't tell whether she was sobbing or giggling. But it didn't matter. Surely a girl could have her own method of accepting a proposal of marriage.

XI

The marriage has really turned out very well. Even Millersville admits it. After all, Mamie Embury proved herself an exceptional woman, and was quite able in every way to take her rightful place in society as Marlin Embury's wife. If her parents seemed below the Millersville social level, no one dared dwell upon it. For young Mrs. Embury, under her soft and blonde exterior, has rather a sharp manner at times and, when necessary, can refer, in the pleasantest way, to things that have taken place in the past—and even the best Millersville families have their skeletons, forged cheques, little unnamed graves, jail sentences, things like that. So, after all, a worthless father can't be held against a person, these days, all things considered.

Mamie is getting to be a bit of a snob, though, even her best friends think, because she objects to Millersville's newest rich belonging to the "society" set and speaks about drawing more conservative lines. Her

father was the black sheep of the family, it appears. The Carpenters are really an old Kentucky family and she often tells that her mother was one of the Virginia Prichards. Millersville knows that there is a great deal in heredity—that blood will tell—so her friends can understand her seeming snobbishness.

Mamie is a charming hostess, and prettier than ever, even if she has grown a bit rounder, and her husband is devoted to her. A poor girl who married the richest man in town—it's beautiful—and it's such a relief, with so many sordid things going on every day, to see real romance, a genuine love match, once in a while.

# A CYCLE OF MANHATTAN

## I

THE Rosenheimers arrived in New York on a day in April. New York, flushed with the first touch of Spring, moved on inscrutably, almost suavely unawares. It was the greatest thing that had ever happened to the Rosenheimers, and even in the light of the profound experiences that were to follow it kept its vast grandeur and separateness, its mysterious and benumbing superiority. Viewed later, in half-tearful retrospect, it took on the character of something unearthly, unmatchable and never quite clear—a violent gallimaufry of strange tongues, humiliating questionings, freezing uncertainties, sudden and paralyzing activities.

The Rosenheimers came by way of the Atlantic Ocean, and if anything remained unclouded in their minds it was a sense of that dour and implacable highway's unfriendliness. They thought of it ever after as an intolerable motion, a penetrating and suffocating smell. They saw it through drenched skylights—now and then as a glimpse of blinding blue on brisk, heaving mornings. They remembered the harsh, unintelligible exactions of officials in curious little blue coats. They dreamed for years of endless nights in damp, smothering bunks. They carried off the taste of strange foods, barbarously served. The Rosenheimers came in the steerage.

There were, at that time, seven of them, if you count Mrs. Feinberg. As Mrs. Feinberg had, for a period of eight years—the age of the oldest Rosenheimer child—been called nothing but Grandma by the family and occasionally Grandma Rosenheimer by outsiders, she was practically a Rosenheimer, too. Grandma was Mrs. Rosenheimer's mother, a decent, simple, round-shouldered "sheideled," little old woman, to whom life was a ceaseless washing of dishes, making of beds, caring for children and cooking of meals. She ruled them all, unknowing.

The head of the house of Rosenheimer was, fittingly, named Abraham. This had abbreviated itself, even in Lithuania, to a more intimate Abe. Abe Rosenheimer was thirty-three, sallow, thin-cheeked and bearded, with a slightly aquiline nose. He was already growing bald. He was not tall and he stooped. He was a clothing cutter by trade. Since his marriage, nine years before, he had been saving to bring his family over. Only the rapid increase of its numbers had prevented him coming sooner.

Abraham Rosenheimer was rather a silent man and he looked stern. Although he recognized his inferiority in a superior world, he was not without his ambitions. These looked toward a comfortable home, his own chair with a lamp by it, no scrimping about meat at meals and a little money put by. He had heard stories about fortunes that could be made in America and in his youth they had stirred him. Now he was not much swayed by them. He was fond of his family and he wanted them "well taken care of," but in the world that he knew the rich and the poor were separated by an unscalable barrier. Un-

less incited temporarily to revolution by fiery acquaintances he was content to hope for a simple living, work not too hard or too long, a little leisure, tranquillity.

He had a comfortable faith which included the belief that, if a man does his best, he'll usually be able to make a living for his family. "Health is the big thing," he would say, and "The Lord will provide." Outside of his prayer-book, he did little reading. It never occurred to him that he might be interested in the outside world. He knew of the existence of none of the arts. His home and his work were all he had ever thought about.

Mrs. Rosenheimer, whose first name was Minnie, was thirty-one. She was a younger and prettier reproduction of her mother, plump and placid, with a mouth inclined to petulancy.

There were four Rosenheimer children. Yetta was eight, Isaac six, Carrie three and little Emanuel had just had his first birthday. Yetta and Carrie were called by their own first names, but Isaac, in America, almost immediately gave way to Ike and little Emanuel became Mannie. They were much alike, dark-haired, dark-eyed, restless, shy, wondering.

The Rosenheimers had several acquaintances in New York, people from the little village near Grodno who had preceded them to America. Most of these now lived in the Ghetto that was arising on the East Side of New York, and Rosenheimer had thought that his family would go there, too, so as to be near familiar faces. He had written several months before, to one Abramson, a sort of a distant cousin, who had been in America for twelve years. As Abramson had promised to meet them, he decided to

rely on Abramson's judgment in finding a home in the city.

Abramson was at Ellis Island and greeted the family with vehement embraces. He seemed amazingly well dressed and at home. He wore a large watchchain and no less than four rings. He introduced his wife, whom he had married since coming to America, though she, too, had come from the old country. She wore silk and carried a parasol.

"I've got a house all picked out for you," he explained in familiar Yiddish. "It isn't in the Ghetto, where some of our friends live, but it's cheap, with lots of comforts and near where you can get work, too."

Any house would have suited the Rosenheimers. They were pitifully anxious to get settled, to rid themselves of the foundationless feeling which had taken possession of them. With eager docility, Yetta carrying Mannie and each of the others carrying a portion of the bundles of wearing apparel and feather comforts which formed their luggage, they followed Abramson to a surface car and to their new home. In their foreign clothes and with their bundles they felt almost as uncomfortable as they had been on shipboard.

The Rosenheimers' new home was in MacDougal Street. They looked with awe on the exterior and pronounced it wonderful. Such a fine building! Of red brick it was! There were three stories. The first story was a stable, the big door open. Little Isaac had to be pulled past the restless horses in front of it. The whole family stood for a moment, drinking in the wonders, then followed Abramson up the stairs. On the second floor

several families lived in what the Rosenheimers thought was palatial grandeur. Even their own home was elegant. It consisted of two rooms—the third floor front. They could hardly be convinced that they were to have all that space. There was a stove in the second room and gas fixtures in both of them—and there was a bathroom, with running water, in the general hall! The Rosenheimers didn't see that the paper was falling from the walls and that, where it had been gone for some years, the plaster was falling, too. Nor that the floor was roughly uneven.

"Won't it be too expensive?" asked Rosenheimer. Abramson chuckled. Though he himself was but a trimmer by trade, he was pleased with the rôle of fairy godfather. He liked twirling wonders in the faces of these simple folk. In comparison, he felt himself quite a success, a cosmopolite. Just about Rosenheimer's age, he had small deposits in two savings banks, a three-room apartment, a wife and two American sons, Sam and Morrie. Both were in public school, and both could speak "good English." He patted Rosenheimer on the back jovially.

"You don't need to worry," he said. "A good cutter here in New York don't have to worry. Even a 'greenhorn' makes a living. There's half a dozen places *you* can choose from. I'll tell you about it, and where to go, tomorrow. Now, we'll go over to my house and have something to eat. Then you'll see how you'll be living in a few years. You can borrow some things from us until you get your own. My wife will be glad to go with Mrs. Rosenheimer and show her where to buy."

The Rosenheimers gave signs of satisfaction as they dropped their bundles and sat down on the empty boxes that stood around, or on the floor. This was something like it! Here they had a fine home in a big brick house, a sure chance of Rosenheimer getting a good job, friends to tell them about things—they had already found their place in New York! Grandma, trembling with excitement, took Mannie in her arms and held him up dramatically.

"See, Mannie, see Mannischen—this is fine—this is the way to live!"

II

Things turned out even more miraculously than the Rosenheimers had dared to hope. After only three days Rosenheimer found a job as a pants cutter at the fabulous wages he had heard of. He could not only pay the high rent, twelve dollars a month, he would also have enough left over for food and clothes, and to furnish the home, if they were careful. Maybe, after the house was in order, there would even be a little to put by. Of course it was no use being too happy about it, he told Mrs. Rosenheimer.

"It looks fine now, but you know you can't always tell. It takes a whole lot to feed a big family."

Although secretly delighted, he was solemn and rather silent over his good fortune. Abraham Rosenheimer was a cautious man.

Mrs. Abramson initiated Grandma and Mrs. Rosenheimer into New York buying. It was fascinating, even more so than buying had been at home. There were

neighbourhood shops where Yiddish was spoken, and already the family was beginning to learn a little English. Mrs. Rosenheimer listened closely to what people said and the children picked up words, playing in the street.

The next weeks were orgies of buying. Not that much was bought, for there wasn't much money and it had to be spent very carefully, but each article meant exploring, looking and haggling. Grandma took the lead in buying —didn't Grandma always do such things? Grandma was only fifty-seven and spry for her age. Didn't she take care of the children and do more than her share of the housework?

Grandma was supremely happy. She liked to buy and she felt that merchants couldn't fool her, even in this strange country. A table was the first thing she purchased. It was almost new and quite large. It was pine and bare of finish, but after Grandma had scrubbed it and scoured it it looked clean and wholesome. It was quite a nice table and only wobbled a little when you leaned on it heavily, for the legs weren't quite even. One was a little loose and Grandma didn't seem able to fasten it. Assisted by Mrs. Rosenheimer and Yetta, she scrubbed the whole flat, so that it equalled the new table in immaculateness. There were families who liked dirt— Grandma had seen them, even in America—but she was glad she didn't belong to one of them.

Then came chairs, each one picked out with infinite care and much sibilant whispering between Grandma, Mrs. Rosenheimer and Mrs. Abramson. There was a rocker, slat-backed, from which most of the slats were missing, though it still rocked "as good as new." The

next chair was leather-covered, though the leather was cut through in places, allowing the horse-hair stuffing to protrude. But, as Mrs. Abramson pointed out, this was an advantage, it showed that the filling wasn't an inferior cotton. There were two straight chairs, one with a leatherette seat, nailed on with bright-coloured nails, the other with a wicker seat, quite neatly mended. There was a cot for Grandma and a bed for Mr. and Mrs. Rosenheimer and Emanuel. The other children were well and strong and could sleep on the floor, of course. Hadn't they brought fine soft feathers with them?

All of the furniture was second- or third-hand and the previous owners had not treated it with much care. So Grandma got some boxes to help out, and she and the Rosenheimers worked over them, pulling and driving nails. Finally they had a cupboard which held all of the new dishes—almost new, if you don't mind a few hardly noticeable nicked edges—and decorated with fine pink roses. Some of the boxes were still used as chairs, "to help out." One fine, high one did very nicely as an extra table, with a grand piece of brand-new oilcloth, in a marbled pattern, tacked over it. They had a home now.

Grandma and Mrs. Rosenheimer marketed every day at the stores and markets in the neighbourhood. Rosenheimer sometimes complained that they used too much money, but then, he "liked to eat well." The little Rosenheimers grew round and merry.

Grandma and Mr. and Mrs. Rosenheimer, looking at the children and at their two big rooms—all their own and so nicely furnished—could hardly imagine anything finer. Grandma and Rosenheimer were absolutely at

peace. But Mrs. Rosenheimer knew that, with more money, there were a lot of things you could buy. She had walked through Washington Square and up Fifth Avenue. She had seen people in fine clothes, people of her own race, too. She didn't have much, after all. Still, most of the time she was content.

Gradually, too, Rosenheimer saw shadows of wealth. He heard rumours of how fortunes were made overnight —his boss now, a few years before, had been a poor boy . . . Nevertheless, smoking his cigarettes and reading his Yiddish paper after his evening meal, or talking with Abramson or one of the men he had met, he was well satisfied with New York as he had found it.

III

As the months passed, the Rosenheimers drank in, unbelievably fast, the details of the city. Already the children were beginning to speak English, not just odd words, here and there, but whole sentences. Already, too, they were beginning to be ashamed of being "greenhorns" and were planning the time when they could say they had been over for years or had been born here. Little Mannie was beginning to talk and every one said he spoke English without an accent.

Yetta and Ike started to school. Each day they brought home some startling bit of information that the family received and assimilated without an eye-wink. Although most of the men at the shop spoke Yiddish, Rosenheimer was learning English, too. He even spoke, vaguely, about learning to read it and write it, and he began to look over English papers, now and then, inter-

estedly. Mrs. Rosenheimer also showed faint literary leanings and sometimes asked questions about things.

Ike was always eager to tell everything he had learned. In a sharp little voice he would instruct, didactically, any one within hearing distance. He rather annoyed Rosenheimer, who was not blinded by the virtues of his eldest son. But he was Mrs. Rosenheimer's favourite. She would sit, hands folded across her ample lap, smiling proudly as he unrolled his fathomless knowledge.

"Listen at that boy! Ain't he wonderful, the way he knows so much?" she would exclaim.

Yetta's learning took the form, principally, of wanting things. Each day, it seemed, she could find out something else she didn't have, that belonged to all American children. And, no matter how penniless Rosenheimer had just declared himself to be, unsmilingly and a bit shamefacedly, he would draw pennies out of the depths of the pocket of his shiny trousers.

Only Grandma showed no desire to learn the ways of the new country. She didn't mind picking up a little English, of course, though she'd got along very nicely all of her life without it. Still, in a new country, it didn't hurt to know something about the language. But as for reading—well, Yiddish was good enough for her, though she didn't mind admitting she didn't read Yiddish easily. Grandma had little use for the printed word.

Each week the Rosenheimers' clothes changed nearer to the prevailing styles of MacDougal Street. Only a few weeks after they arrived Mrs. Rosenheimer, overcome by her new surroundings, bought, daringly, a lace sailor collar, which she fastened around the neck of her

old-world costume. As the months passed, even this failed to satisfy. The dress itself finally disappeared, reappearing as a school frock for Yetta, and Mrs. Rosenheimer wore a modest creation of red plaid worsted which Grandma and she had made, huge sleeves, bell skirt and all, after one they had seen in Washington Square on a "society lady."

Just a year after they arrived in America, Mrs. Rosenheimer discarded her *sheidel*. She even tried to persuade Grandma to leave hers off, but Grandma demurred. There were things you couldn't do decently, even in a new country. Mrs. Rosenheimer made the innovation in a spirit of fear, but when no doom overtook her and she found in a few weeks how "stylish" she looked, she never regretted the change. She was wearing curled bangs, good as the next one, before long.

Little Ike had a new suit, bought ready-made, his first bought suit, not long afterwards. The trousers were a bit too long, but surely that was an advantage, for he was growing fast, going on eight. They couldn't call him a "greenhorn" now. He came home, too, with reports of how smart his teacher said he was and of the older boys, unbelievers, whom he had "got ahead of" in school. His shrill voice would grow louder and higher as he would explain to the admiring Mrs. Rosenheimer and Grandma what a fine lad he was getting to be.

Other signs of change now appeared. Scarcely a year had gone by before lace curtains appeared at the two front windows. They were of different patterns, but what of that? They had been cheaper that way, as "samples." By tautly drawn strings, white and stiff they hung,

adding a touch of elegance to the abode. Only three months later a couch was added, the former grandeur of its tufted surface not at all dimmed by a few years of wear. Yetta and Carrie slept on it, luxuriously, one at each end. It was a long couch and they were so little.

Then a cupboard for dishes appeared. Grandma bought it from a family that was "selling out." It had glass doors. At least there had been glass doors. One was broken now, but who noticed that? In the corner of the front room, opposite the couch, it looked very "stylish." And not long afterward there was a carpet in the front room, three strips of it, with a red and green pattern. Then, indeed, the Rosenheimers felt that they could, very proudly, "be at home to their friends." They had company, now, families of old friends and new, from the Ghetto and from their own neighbourhood. And they visited, *en masse,* in return.

There wasn't much money, of course. Rosenheimer was getting good wages, but children eat a lot and beg for pennies between meals. And shoes! But like many men of his race and disposition, Rosenheimer never contributed quite all of his funds to his household. Nor did he take his women into his confidence. He felt that they could not counsel him wisely, which was probably right, for neither Grandma nor Mrs. Rosenheimer was interested in anything outside of their home and their friends. Besides this, he had a natural secrecy, a dislike of talking things over with his family. So, each week, he made an infinitesimal addition to the savings account he had started. He even considered various investments—he knew of men who were buying the tenements in which

they lived on wages no bigger than his, living in the basement and taking care of the house outside of working hours. But he felt that he was still too much the "greenhorn" for such enterprises, so he kept on with his small and secret savings.

IV

In 1897 another member was added to the family. This meant a big expense, a midwife and later a doctor, but Rosenheimer had had a raise by this time—he was, in fact, now a foreman—so the expense was met without difficulty. There was real joy at the arrival of this baby—more than at the coming of any of the previous children. For this was an American baby, and seemed, in some way, to make the whole family more American. The baby was a girl and even the sex seemed satisfactory, though, of course, at every previous addition the Rosenheimers had hoped for a boy.

There was a great discussion, then, about names. Before this, a baby had always been named after some dead ancestor or relative without much ado. It was best to name a child after a relative, but, according to custom, if the name didn't quite suit, you took the initial instead. By some process of reasoning, this was supposed to be naming the child "after" the honoured relative. Now the Rosenheimers wanted something grandly American for the new baby. Grandma wanted Dora, after her mother. But Dora didn't sound American enough. Ike suggested Della, but that didn't suit, either. Finally Yetta brought home Dorothy. It was a very stylish name, it seemed, and was finally accepted.

Little Emanuel, aged four, was told that "his nose was out of joint." He cried and felt of it. It seemed quite straight to him. It was. He was a handsome little fellow, and, when Mrs. Rosenheimer took him out with her, folks would stop and ask about him. She was glad when she could answer them in English. And as for Mannie—at four he talked as if no other country than America had ever existed.

Very gradually, Mrs. Rosenheimer grew tired of MacDougal Street. She tried to introduce this dissatisfaction into the rest of the family. Grandma was very happy here. With little shrugs and gestures she decried any further change. Weren't they all getting along finely? Wasn't Rosenheimer near his work? Weren't the children fat and healthy? What could they have better than this—two rooms, running water, gas and everything? Didn't they know people all around them? Rosenheimer was indifferent. Some of his friends, including the Abramsons, had already moved "farther out." Still, he didn't see the use of spending so much money; they were all right where they were. Times were hard; you couldn't tell what might happen. Still, if Minnie had her heart set on it— The children were ready for any change.

Mrs. Rosenheimer, revolving the matter endlessly in her mind, found many reasons for moving. All of her friends, it seemed, had fled from the noise and dirt of MacDougal Street. On first coming to New York she had been disappointed at not living in the Ghetto over on the East side. Now, when she visited there, she wondered how she had ever liked it. When she moved she

wanted something really fine—and where her friends were, too. She had a good many friends outside of the Ghetto now. On arriving in America she hadn't known MacDougal Street was dirty. She knew it now. And the little Italian children in the neighbourhood—oh, they were all right, of course, but—not just whom you'd want your children to play with, exactly. Why, every day Ike would come home with terrible things they had said to him. And their home, which had looked so grand, was old and ugly, too, when compared with those of other people. Of course Grandma liked it, but, after all, Grandma was old-fashioned. Mrs. Rosenheimer discovered, almost in one breath, that her mother belonged to a passing generation, and didn't keep up with the times—that she, herself, really had charge of the household.

Out in East Seventy-seventh Street there were some tenements, not at all like those of MacDougal Street nor the Ghetto, but brand-new, just the same as rich people had. Each flat had a regular kitchen with a sink and running water and a fine new gas stove. The front room had a mirror in it that belonged to the house—and—unbelievably but actually true—there was a bathroom for each family. It had a tub in it, painted white, and a washstand—both with running water—and already there was oilcloth, in blue and white, on the bathroom floor. The outer halls had gas in them that burned all night—some sort of a law. Those tenements were elegant—that was the way to live.

Rosenheimer got another raise. There was some sort of an organization of cutters, a threatened strike, and

then sudden success. Mrs. Rosenheimer never understood much about it but it meant more money. Now Rosenheimer had no legitimate reason for keeping his family in MacDougal Street.

So he and Mrs. Rosenheimer and Grandma went out to the new tenements and looked around. Mrs. Rosenheimer acted as spokesman, talking with the woman at the renting office, asking questions, pointing things out. At the end of the afternoon Rosenheimer rented one of the four-room flats in a new tenement building.

On the way home, Mrs. Rosenheimer leaned close to her husband:

"Ain't it grand, the way we are going to live now?" she asked.

"If we can pay for it."

"With you doing so well, how you talk!"

"Good enough, but money, these days—"

"Abe, do you want to do something for me?"

"Go on, something more to spend money on."

"Not a cent, Abe. Only, won't you—shave your beard? Moving to a new neighbourhood and all. Not for me, but the neighbours should see what an American father the children have got."

Rosenheimer frowned a bit uneasily. Mrs. Rosenheimer didn't refer to it again, but three days later he came home strangely thin and white-looking—his beard gone. Only a little moustache, soft and mixed with red, remained.

Before the Rosenheimers moved they sold the worst of their furniture to the very man from whom they bought

it, five years before, taking only the big bed, the table and the couch. It was Mrs. Rosenheimer who insisted on this.

"Trash we've got, when you compare it to the way others live. We need new things in a fine new flat."

On the day they were moving, Yetta said something. The family were amazed into silence. Yetta was thirteen now, a tall girl, rather plump, with black hair and flashing eyes.

"When we move, let's get rid of some of our name," she said. "I hate it. It's awfully long—Rosenheimer. Nobody ever says it all, anyhow. Let's call ourselves Rosenheim."

"Why, why," muttered her father, finally, "how you talk! . Change my name, as if I was a criminal or something."

"Aw," Yetta pouted, she was her father's favourite and she knew it, "this family of greenhorns make me tired. Rosenheimer—if it was longer you'd like it better. Ike Rosenheimer and Carrie Rosenheimer and Yetta Rosenheimer! It's awful. Leaving off two letters would only help a little—and that's too much for you. Since the Abramsons moved they are Abrams, and you know it. And Sam—do you know what? At school they called him MacDougal because he lived here on this street and he liked it better than Sam, so he's calling himself MacDougal Abrams now. And here, you old-timers—"

"She's right, Mamma," said Ike, "our names are awful."

Mannie didn't say anything. He sucked a great red

lollypop. At six one doesn't care much about names. Nor did Carrie, who was eight.

There was a letter-box for each family in the entrance hall of the new tenement building and a space for the name of the family just above it. Maybe Rosenheimer had taken the advice of his children. Perhaps he wrote in large letters and couldn't get all of his name in the space made for it. Anyhow, Rosenheim was announced to the world as the occupant of Flat 52.

## V

Flat 52 was quite as handsome as Mrs. Rosenheim had dreamed it would be. There were four rooms in it. In the parlour was the famous built-in mirror, with a ledge below it to hold ornaments. And, before long, ornaments there were, three big vases. They were got with coupons from the coffee and tea store at the corner—it was a lucky thing all the Rosenheims liked coffee. There was the couch, too, but best of all was the new table. It was brand-new—no one else had ever used it before. Mrs. Rosenheim bought it in Avenue A and was paying for it weekly out of the household allowance. It was red and shiny and round and each little Rosenheim was warned not to press sticky fingers on it, though it was always full of finger marks.

On the table was a mat of blue plush and on the plush mat was—yes—a book—"Wonders of Natural History." It had been Yetta's birthday present from her father and was quite handsome enough, coloured pictures, red binding and all, to grace even this gem of a table. There was a new rug in this room, too, though it was new only

to the Rosenheims. There were roses woven right into it and Grandma thought it was the most beautiful thing she had ever seen. She liked to sit and look at it as she rocked.

Yetta, Carrie and Grandma slept in the front room—just the three of them alone in the biggest room. There was a cot, covered with a Turkish spread, for the girls and Grandma slept on the couch—no sleeping on the floor any more for this family. So wonderful was the new home that there was a bedroom devoted exclusively to the rites of sleeping. Mr. and Mrs. Rosenheim and Dorothy occupied it. The third room was the dining-room, where Ike and Mannie slept all alone on a cot and weren't afraid. No one slept in the kitchen or bathroom at all. In the dining-room there was a whole "set" of furniture, bought from the family that was moving out, a square table and six chairs. It was lucky Mannie and Dorothy were so little they could sit on others' laps.

The dining-room with its fine "set," brought the habit of regular meals with it. In MacDougal Street there was a supper-time, of course, but the children weren't always there and the other meals had been rather haphazard, half of the family standing up, likely as not. Now there was a regular breakfast in the morning, every one sitting down, and early enough for Rosenheim to get to work on time and Yetta and Ike and Carrie to get to school. Lunch was still informal, eaten standing around the kitchen. Supper was a grand meal, every one sitting down at the same time, the table all set with tablecloth and dishes, as if it were a party.

It was easy to settle down into the pleasant rhythm of East Seventy-seventh Street. There were big new tenements on each side of the street and before long each member of the family made lots of friends.

Rosenheim didn't have as many friends as the others. He didn't care for them. His hours were long and he was getting into the habit of working, sometimes, at night. It takes a lot of money to pay rent—six dollars every week—and buy clothes and food for a family and save a little, too. Rosenheim didn't complain unless his usual solemn face and prediction of hard times can be called complaining. It never occurred to him that he had anything to complain about. Didn't he have a fine home and a lot to eat, a home grander than he ought to spend the money for, even? When he wasn't busy, he and Abrams and a friend of theirs, sometimes a man named Moses, would play cards long hours at a time, talking in loud, seemingly angry voices and smoking long cigarettes. Or, with coat, collar and shoes off, as he always sat in the house, he would read the paper—he could read English quite easily, but he preferred Yiddish. He didn't talk much and the children were taught "not to worry Papa," when he was at home.

Grandma grew to like the new home in time, though it never seemed quite as pleasant as that in MacDougal Street. She did all of the cooking, of course, and could order the children around as much as she wanted to, though they were good children as a rule, when you let them see who was boss. She would exclaim with clasped hands over the grandeur of things and beg her God that the people from her home town might see "how we live

like this." She was always busy. She never learned to speak English well, and though at sixty-two she could drive a bargain as good as ever, she didn't feel quite comfortable in the near-by shops as she had in MacDougal Street. Gradually her daughter took over the marketing from her.

The spirit of change had reached Mrs. Rosenheim and she did what she could to grasp it. She tried again to persuade Grandma to take off her *sheidel.*

"See, Grandma, these other people. Ain't you as good as them? It ain't nothing to be ashamed of, a *shiedel,* but here in America we do what others do."

But Grandma kept her *sheidel.* She couldn't yield everything to the customs of the unbelievers. She even muttered things about "forgetting your own people."

Mrs. Rosenheim tried to acquire "elegant English." She was very proud of her children because their language was unsullied by accent. But perhaps because she never liked to read and it never occurred to her that she might study, or because her tongue had lost its flexibility, she was never able to conceal her foreignness. She was becoming a little self-satisfied, too, a bit complacent with her own ways, and this may have hindered her progress. The new language issued forth in a strange, twisted form, the "w's" and "v's" transposed, the intonations of the Yiddish always noticeable. She managed to make nearly all of the ordinary grammatical errors of the native and a few pet ones of her own. Her sentences were full of inversions. Her voice, never very low, became louder and louder and the singing intonations more marked as she grew excited. Rosenheim spoke with

an accent, too, which he always retained, but his voice was quite low and he soon overcame this strange sing-song of his native tongue. Then, too, Rosenheim never talked very much.

Mrs. Rosenheim bloomed in East Seventy-seventh Street. Her mother did the cooking and Yetta helped with the housework. Even then, with so many children in the house, there was enough to do, but she spent much time in visiting her neighbours, gossiping about her children, the prices of food, other neighbours. Although her family came first, she began to pay more attention to herself, buying clothes that were not absolutely necessary, cheap things that looked fine to her. She became ambitious, too. She found that there was another life not bounded by the tenements and that "other people," the rich part of the world, were not much different outside of their possession of money. Her humility was wearing away. "We're as good as anybody" came to her mind, and was beginning to fertilize. She didn't want to associate with any one outside of her own group, but she liked to feel that others were not superior. The children, continuing their acquisitiveness, encouraged their mother.

Yetta had her fourteenth birthday soon after the family moved to East Seventy-seventh Street. She began to mature rather rapidly, arranging her hair in an exaggerated following of the fashion and even purchased and wore a pair of corsets. She had a high colour and her flashing eyes made her quite attractive. Her mouth was rather wide. Yetta did not speak with a foreign accent, but her voice was a trifle hoarse and was not well mod-

ulated. She had a lot to say about nearly everything and delighted in saying it. The niceties of conversation had not been introduced into the Rosenheim family life and most of the things Yetta thought of occurred when some one else was talking. Her favourite method of attracting attention was to interrupt or talk down, in a louder voice, any one who had the floor. Ike had this pleasant little habit, too, so between them conversation rose in roaring waves of sound.

Yetta felt that many things about her could be improved. She began to criticize things at home—her clothes; her mother's language, which was too full of errors, too singing to suit her daughter; the actions of the younger children. She never liked to read, but she "loved a good time" and was always with a group of girls and boys, laughing and talking.

Ike was much like Yetta, though a bit more serious, more inclined to argument. He could argue over anything even at twelve. He, too, had definite notions about the upbringing of the younger children and the modernity of the household. He didn't want any one making fun of the family he belonged to. His own name came in for his disapproval about this time.

He had a fight with a boy named Jim and Jim hit him and called him names. But the cruelest part of Jim's name-calling had been merely to repeat, over and over again, "Ikey Rosenheim, Ikey Rosenheim." For this cruelty Ike had fought Jim and had emerged not entirely victorious, bringing back a black eye and the memory of the derision in the mouth of the enemy.

"I'm going to change my name," Ike announced at

supper that night. "I don't care what this family says. You make me sick, naming me Ike. You might have known. This family has terrible names. No wonder people make fun of us. After this I'm—I'm going to be —Harold."

"Oh, no, not Harold," Grandma wailed, with uplifted hands.

"No," Mrs. Rosenheim groaned, "you've got to keep the letter, the 'I.' You were named after your Papa's father."

"There's a lot of good names beginning with 'I,' " Yetta encouraged. So, between them, they found Irving, which seemed satisfactory to every one. Little Irving, at school, told his teacher that Ike had been a nickname and that the family wanted him called by his own name, now. Jim, not satisfied with Irving Rosenheim as a reproach, had to find something else to fight about.

Carrie and Mannie and Dorothy were still too little to bother about names. They begged for pennies for lollypops on sticks, candy apples, licorice and other delicacies that the neighbourhood afforded, satisfied to tag after Mrs. Rosenheim as she did the marketing. They were nice children, though of course Dorothy was a little spoiled—the youngest child and always having her own way about everything.

## VI

During the next year something came up in a business way that caused Rosenheim and Abrams to hold long consultations during many evenings. They nodded together over bits of paper on which there were many fig-

ures. Mrs. Rosenheim felt that they had "something in their heads" they weren't telling her about, but, being a dutiful wife—and knowing her husband, and how useless it would have been—she didn't press matters. A few weeks later she found out. E. G. Plotski had died suddenly, leaving no near relatives except a wife. Abrams had heard about the case. Mrs. Plotski couldn't keep up the business alone. If she couldn't "sell out," complete, she was going to give it up and sell the machinery. She had some cousins in a far-Western place called, Abrams believed, Iowa, and was desirous of living with them. If Mrs. Plotski "gave up the business" there was a tremendous loss, it seemed to Abrams and Rosenheim—for Plotski already had operators, customers, "good will." And with their knowledge of the pants business . . .

It seemed, indeed, a visitation, as if a whole pants business had descended to them as a direct reward for their long and faithful work. But Mrs. Plotski had friends, not just in a position to buy the business, it seemed, but quite capable of giving advice about selling it. And herein lay the need of much nodding and figuring. Finally it was settled. Abrams and Rosenheim went to their several banks—it's never safe to put all of your savings in one bank, even if it does look like a fine big one—drew out their saving accounts, for of course they had no checking accounts, and, after the usual legalities had been concluded, were the joint partners of The Acme Pants Company, Men's and Boys' Pants.

After they had signed their names, Marcus L. Abrams

and Abraham G. Rosenheim, Rosenheim allowed his stern face to relax into a rather sad smile.

"Good, eh, Marcus? Here, I'm only 'over' seven years and I'm partner in a business already. Of course, we can expect hard times, but, a business ain't anything to be ashamed of."

The family saw Rosenheim's new signature and liked it. Irving wrote it above the letter-box. The G stood for nothing in particular, but Rosenheim had no middle name and of course he ought to have one. It was indeed American. The neighbourhood did not notice, it was used to changes.

Abrams and Rosenheim worked all day and most of the night. They "went over the books" with great deliberation. They looked into every minute detail of the business, and wrote numerous letters by hand on the old Acme Pants Company letterheads that they found in Plotski's desk. When this paper was used up they ordered more, retaining the cut of the building at the top but substituting their names for the name of the deceased former owner.

They were very happy over their new business, though you would never have known it by their actions. They always wore long faces.

The factory did well. People liked ready-made pants, it seemed. The two men hurried around seeking new trade, satisfied with as small a profit as possible. They bought job lots of woollens from the factories and did numberless other things to reduce expenses. Rosenheim cut the pants and Abrams was not too proud to do his share of the menial labour. Before another year had

passed the whole of the third floor loft belonged to the Acme Pants Company.

Mrs. Rosenheim was proud of her husband. It was mighty fine, these days, to speak of "my husband's factory" to those women whose more unfortunate spouses were forced to exist on mere wages handed them by their overlords. But even this, in time, stopped satisfying. What good does it do for your husband to own a factory if you still live in a tenement in East Seventy-seventh Street? Mrs. Rosenheim knew that her husband was working hard and was nearly always worried over money matters, bills to meet, wages to be paid. But, as long as he actually was a manufacturer, and owner of a business, a payer of wages, it was unbelievable that they should live in a tenement. Weren't they as good as anybody? Several months ago the Abrams had moved. Of course, with only two boys the expenses were less, but what of that? And the Moskowskis—now the Mosses—had moved, too. The Rosenheims had been in the tenement three years and now the neighbourhood was filling up with terrible people, straight from the Ghetto—or the old country—and bringing foreign habits with them. It was no place to bring up growing American children.

It was Yetta who precipitated the moving. Although he petted and humoured Dorothy, it was his oldest child who was Rosenheim's favourite. Now Yetta tried all of her most endearing tricks.

"Papa," she said, "I'm sixteen. I ought to get out of this neighbourhood. Ask Mamma. I'm almost a young lady. I want good things—a fine man like you with a factory shouldn't keep his children in the tene-

ments. All of my crowd are gone. I miss them something awful. You don't want me to go with the—the 'greenhorns' who are moving in around here, do you?"

Similar arguments managed to convince Rosenheim. Anyhow, one night he nodded solemnly and consented to move.

"You women will ruin me yet, with all your spending," he said, but Yetta, tall though she was, jumped on his lap and kissed his thin cheek.

"None of that," he said, in assumed brusqueness, as he pushed her away. "You make a fool of your old Papa, eh? Well, go along and get your fine flat."

Mrs. Rosenheim and Yetta, accompanied by Mrs. and Miss Graham, a recent and becoming transformation of their old friends, the Grabinskis, went apartment hunting. They decided on the Bronx, new and good enough for any manufacturer's family. They had friends there and there were lots of stores. It was a nice neighbourhood, Yetta thought, with lots of young people who wore good clothes. She could have a fine time.

No longer were the Rosenheims satisfied with the first apartment shown them. Yetta and her mother had grown critical. Yetta's ambitions had limitations, of course. She didn't aspire to an elevator apartment or anything like that—but she didn't want a tenement. She wanted a big living-room, for she was approaching the beau age and already was going to the theatre with MacDougal Abrams and Milton Cohn. They visited dozens of apartments, examining the kitchens and halls, exclaiming over the plumbing. Grandma wanted a big kitchen and she ought to have it, as long as she did most

of the cooking. And they had been crowded for years—Yetta didn't want any one sleeping in the front room, nor even in the dining-room. Young girls do get such notions! Mrs. Rosenheim wanted grand decorations in the lower hall.

After much stepclimbing they found their apartment. It was on the fourth floor, rear, of a walk-up apartment, but the rent was forty dollars a month and they dared not pay more. Rosenheim looked dour when the news was broken to him, but, with sad headshaking and remarks about business being bad, he said they might take it.

The entrance hall of the apartment-house was of marble. The letter-boxes were of brass and shining. The stairs leading to the apartment were carpeted. The apartment itself had seven rooms. A few years before the Rosenheims wouldn't have believed an apartment could be so large. Now they all accepted it rather indifferently. Wasn't Rosenheim a factory owner? Didn't some of their friends live just as grandly? The woodwork was shining oak. The floors glittered blondly. Mr. and Mrs. Rosenheim had a bedroom all alone, Grandma shared a tiny cubicle with Dorothy. Yetta and Carrie had their room and there was a room for the boys. All the rooms had new beds of white enamelled iron, fantastically twisted and with big brass knobs.

The Rosenheims got rid of most of their old things at a sale before they left East Seventy-seventh Street. Then Mrs. Rosenheim and Yetta bought things suitable for the grandeur of their new home at an instalment house in Sixth Avenue. There was a three-piece parlour set stained to a red imitation of mahogany. The round

table had come with them, as had the vases. The dining-room boasted a new "set," a round table that pulled apart and had four extra leaves and sat on a huge pedestal, and eight chairs—two with arms, making one for each of them. There were brand-new rugs, one for each room, most of them in patterns of birds and beasts and flowers in bright colourings, though the front room displayed a gay and exciting "Oriental pattern."

One of the startling changes of the new régime was the name above the letter-box. A simple and chaste A. G. Rosen was announced in Irving's most careful writing. Rosenheim explained that, at the factory, every one called him Rosen for short and it might make it confusing to keep the old name. The family hailed Rosen joyfully. Surely they were real Americans, now.

VII

They were settled only a few months when Yetta begged and got—a piano. Shiningly red, it matched the rest of the living-room furniture. It was an upright, of course, and Yetta draped a pale silk scarf embroidered in gold threads over it, with a vase at either end to hold it in place. Soon she and Carrie were taking lessons from a Mme. Roset of the neighbourhood, making half-hours horrible with scales and five-finger exercises.

There were now other forms of art in the household, too. For his birthday the children gave their father enlargements of the photographs of him and their mother. These were "hand-made crayons" in grey, with touches of colour on lips and cheeks and framed in wide carved oak, trimmed with gold. They were placed side by side

above the piano, which stood slightly diagonally in one corner.

The children were growing up. Yetta felt herself quite a young lady and didn't go to school. There was no use going any more—she wasn't going to be a teacher, was she? She had a lovely handwriting, with fine loops at the ends of the "y's" and "g's." It seemed a shame to spend her days in school when there were so many things to do outside. No one tried to persuade her to keep on going. Her father was slightly of the opinion that too much learning wasn't good for a girl anyhow. Men didn't like "smart" girls and Yetta was growing up. If she had wanted to go to school he might have consented, but she didn't. She preferred putting on her best clothes, her hat an exaggerated copy of something she had seen in Broadway and had had made after her description at a neighbourhood shop, a cheap fur around her neck, high-heeled shoes. Thus attired, she went walking.

In the morning she had to help a little with the bed-making, dusting and ironing. But in the afternoons she was free. She'd meet some of "the girls" or "the boys" and drink soda, laughing and giggling over things. She used the latest slang and talked rather loudly. At night there were dances or the crowd would go, in pairs or groups, to the theatre, sitting in the gallery, usually, and laughing heartily over the jokes. They were fondest of vaudeville. Yetta was awfully happy when she had enough spending money and a new dress—a bit more exaggerated in style than any of her friends. She couldn't imagine anything finer than the new neighbourhood and the new apartment.

Grandma was just a trifle bewildered in the Bronx. She didn't seem to fit in. The children, growing up, were developing unexpected opinions of their own that didn't agree with her ideas. They called her old-fashioned and giggled at her advice. There was plenty to do and Grandma liked housework. But sixty-five isn't young and Grandma had worked hard in her day. Four flights of stairs aren't easy, either, so Grandma didn't go out often. Occasionally, she walked around the neighbourhood, not knowing just what to do. Mrs Rosen did all her own marketing or telephoned for things—there was a telephone in the new apartment. There were a few old friends to go to see, foreign-born women, like herself, and with these she would talk in comfortable Yiddish. But each one lived several blocks away. You didn't talk to strangers in this neighbourhood, it seemed, and you could go for weeks and not see any one you knew. A funny place, America.

Still, there were pleasant things for Grandma—good food and the fun of preparing it, a comfortable home. Mrs. Rosen didn't like to work as well as she used to, so finally she hired a woman who came in, one day a week, to do the washing in the morning and the scrubbing of kitchen and bath in the afternoon. Grandma was quite excited over this innovation. For the first time in her life she could fold her gnarled old hands and watch some one do the work for her.

"They should hear about this back home," she would say. "Abe with a factory and us with seven rooms and a washwoman and all. We've got it lucky, ain't it, Minnie?"

Mrs. Rosen, though annoyed at her mother's simplicity, agreed. Already Mrs. Rosen was planning bigger things. It didn't seem at all impossible to her that some day they might even have a regular servant girl.

Mrs. Rosen was well satisfied, generally. Occasionally she, too, regretted some of the pleasant things that Seventy-seventh Street had meant for her. She had liked the friendly chatter of the neighbourhood. Here in the Bronx you had to be "dressed" all the time. In Seventy-seventh Street you could go out in the morning in your house-dress, with a basket, and spend a pleasant hour or so bargaining with the shop-keepers and talking with friends, always meeting little groups you knew. On the steps, in the evening you could call back and forth. Money was good; she was glad she had it. A servant girl would be fine; it was a lot of work for her and Grandma, cleaning up after five children. But this neighbourhood was stylish enough. You knew some of your neighbours here, even if they weren't so friendly. Maybe, after you got better acquainted . . .

It was nice, having a lot of rooms and new clothes and all that. Mrs. Rosen finally met new acquaintances and liked them. She played cards in the afternoons now and a few months later joined a euchre club which met every Tuesday afternoon at the homes of its members in turn. There were "refreshments" after the game, cold meat and potato salad, usually, and the prizes were hand-painted china and "honiton lace" centrepieces. Mrs. Rosen won quite an assortment as the months passed.

Irving was getting to be a big boy. He looked a little like his father, thin, a trifle sallow, with a slightly aqui-

line nose—but much handsomer, his mother thought. His eyes were not strong and quite early he had to wear glasses. He adopted nose-glasses and before he quite got used to them he had formed the habit of tilting his head up, to keep them from falling off. He had rather a sharp chin and wore his black hair straight back and sleek.

When the family moved to the Bronx he was fourteen, had on a first pair of long trousers, and was in the first year of the high school. He was quick in his studies and would argue with his teachers about anything under discussion. He still liked long dissertations at home and had about decided to be a lawyer. In the years that followed he read quite a little, not so much for the love of reading—he had little of that—but from a desire "to keep up with things," so he could discuss and dissect and argue. He liked the theatre as he grew older, but preferred serious dramas.

Carrie was quieter than either Yetta or Irving, but she observed a great deal. She liked to spend money, begging it from her parents. "We're rich, why can't I have more things?" she would say, buying unnecessarily expensive ribbons and purses. She liked to correct the family, too, and, when her mother grew vocal and her voice took on the sing-song of her native tongue, Carrie would say, "Don't talk so loud, Mother. We aren't deaf, you know," or "This is America. We try to speak English here." Mrs. Rosen would check herself rather shamefacedly, instead of "calling the child down," as she felt she should have done. Carrie liked expensive clothes and she liked putting them on and taking long walks with just one girl friend, talking quietly. She thought Yetta's crowd

awfully loud. Mannie and Dorothy were good-looking little children, still coaxers of pennies and both rather spoiled.

The Acme Pants Company grew, but in spite of its growth none of the family dared suggest any extravagant changes. Rosen spoke too much about hard times for that. And he did worry, too, for with the enlarging of the business came the borrowing of money and notes to meet. He worked at night for weeks at a time and grew thinner. Outside of his usual solemnity he never complained. He enjoyed the business as much for its own sake as for the things he was able to give his family. It was far more interesting and absorbing to him than they were. Even at home his mind was filled with business detail and in the midst of a meal or a friendly discussion his eyes would grow vacant, he would fumble for a pencil and write something down on an envelope. Spare evenings, he played cards with Abrams or Moss or Hammer or fell asleep over his newspaper—an English one, nearly always, now. He still took off his coat in the house and sometimes his collar and tie. It was Carrie who said to him, "Papa, why do you start undressing as soon as you get home?" He always kept on his shoes and sometimes his collar and tie after that.

He never took much part in the family life. Irving bored him. He was not interested in "women's doings," and could ignore whole evenings of conversation about people and clothes. His business was the one thing he cared to talk about—his family knew nothing about business. What was there left? None of them knew or cared anything about world affairs. It isn't likely Rosen

would have been interested if they had. So, unconsciously, he drew apart more and more. He paid bills, with a little grumbling. He handed out money when necessary. He greeted all luxuries with something about "hard times." He accepted all innovations with apparent disregard. He was never cross or disagreeable. Every one was a little quieter when he was at home. Otherwise it was as if he were not there at all.

VIII

A year later, when she was eighteen, Yetta became, suddenly, Yvette. The crowd she was going with thought Yetta an awful name, old-fashioned and foreign. And certainly there was nothing foreign about her. She had seen Yvette in a book—and, with the right initial and all—Yvette Rosen sounded fine. After that she frowned at any one, even old Grandma, if the old name crept in.

The family became more extravagant as the days passed, though not extraordinarily so. But why not? Even Rosen had to admit, grudgingly, that the factory was growing. Little things—Mrs. Rosen had a fine black silk dress, with revers of green satin, lace covered. She bought Grandma a black silk, too, for days when company came in. And Yvette—how that girl did wear out clothes, to parties nearly every night! And Irving wanted "his own money" and was put on an allowance, though he always begged his mother for more before the month was half over. Books cost a lot, it seemed, and you can't be a tightwad with a bunch of fellows. And Carrie had a notion that the family was very rich—when

she got new things she wanted the best. Even Mannie and Dorothy needed new things frequently.

In 1906 Irving was graduated, at 18, from the high school. It was a big event for the family. All of them, even Grandma, who didn't go out much, attended the graduation exercises. At the hall they chatted about how fine and smart Irving was until Carrie, who could be very petulant at fifteen, "shushed" them all into silence.

On the way home Mrs. Rosen couldn't help calling her husband's attention to his family—weren't they something to be proud of? To think that only a few years before . . .

It was Irving who first spoke dissatisfaction with the Bronx apartment. Irving was to enter Columbia University in the fall and he wanted to be a little nearer his school.

"You don't know how it is," he said, one night at dinner. "Every one laughs at the Bronx. I went to a vaudeville show with Yvette last week, though Heavens knows why she goes to it, and at the mention of the Bronx every one laughed. It isn't only that. Here we are in a walk-up apartment, when we could have something better. I'm starting—to—to make friends. I've got to make a place for myself. I'm eighteen. When we were younger it didn't make much difference, now we ought to get out of here."

Carrie agreed with him.

"It certainly is terrible here," she said. "I don't like this high school, either. I want to go to a private school. There are several good ones in Harlem and a real fine one on Riverside Drive that I've heard about. Irving is right.

You'd think we were poor, the way we live here—no servants or anything. When I meet new girls I'm ashamed to bring them home. Ada is going to private school, and Beatrice has moved to Long Island. I don't know any one around here—but trash and poor people."

Even Mannie, at thirteen, was tired of the Bronx and Dorothy, at nine, was ready for any change.

The Bronx suited Yvette. She had her crowd here. Still, there was something in what the others were saying. Harlem sounded more stylish certainly. She had friends there, too, and could get acquainted easily enough.

Mrs. Rosen didn't know. She felt, with Yvette, that things were very nice as they were. The old friendliness of East Seventy-seventh Street would never come back, and she, too, had acquaintances in Harlem. It would cost more to live—but didn't they have the money? There could be a servant and new furniture—the children had been hard on the things that had been so shining four years ago. After all, they were rich people, and the children had to have advantages.

Gradually Rosen, grumblingly, was won over. Couldn't he see how terrible it was—all their money, and still living in the Bronx? How could people know he was a success? Their apartment was old-fashioned—that funny tub and only one bathroom for the whole family. And Grandma ought to have a room for herself—with five children there ought to be a servant girl—what was the use of having money if you couldn't get things with it?

Again there was a series of house-huntings. This time Irving accompanied his mother and Yvette. Irving was very critical. Things others pronounced "grand" he

didn't like at all. At eighteen he considered himself quite a man. As a coming lawyer he felt that his surroundings should reflect his own glory. What did his folks know about things? Didn't he go to homes they never entered, the Wissels' and the Durham-Levi's? Irving wanted a home with style to it. He hadn't definite ideas about decoration, but it must look fine and big as you came in. He thought they ought to inquire a little about the neighbours—find out if they were just the sort one would want to live near. Their present neighbours certainly were awful.

The new apartment was in West 116th street. The building was large and red, with white stone ornaments. The lower halls were grandly ornamental and a great velvet curtain hung toward the rear. There was an elevator, rather uncertain, with iron grille work in front. That would make it nice for Grandma—she could get out more. The living room had a gas grate and the woodwork was stylishly mission finished.

Followed the usual buying orgy and this, too, Irving consented to attend. The piano came with them, but there was a new parlour set, great heavy pieces of mission, square and dark, with leather cushions. A huge mission davenport was the pièce de résistance. The dining-room had a brand new "set"—there might be company to dinner—a big table, twelve chairs and a sideboard with a mirrored back. In the bedrooms there were great brass beds, the posts three inches across, and large mahogany dressers with "swell fronts," curved generously outward.

In the living room, too, there were fine rugs, "real Orientals" this time, about six small ones, oases of red

and blue on the light inlaid floor. The family admired the lighting fixtures—a cluster of fourteen lights in the living-room, to which they added a fancy lamp with a shade composed of bits of coloured glass in a floral pattern; in the dining-room a great dome of multi-coloured glass hung directly over the table.

Then Mrs. Rosen hired their first maid, though the family referred to her as "the girl." Her name was Marie and she didn't have a very easy life of it. At first Mrs. Rosen and Grandma helped her, but Mrs. Rosen disliked housework increasingly and she didn't want Grandma to work if she didn't. Grandma had always done all the cooking, but as "the girl" learned to prepare the dishes liked by the Rosen family she gradually took over the cooking, too. Then, when "the girl" complained about working too hard a woman was hired for two days each week to do the washing and heavy cleaning.

Grandma wasn't quite as content as she had been, most likely because she wasn't so busy. Grandma couldn't read English at all and Yiddish very little, even if the children would have allowed a Yiddish paper in the house, now, which is doubtful. Grandma had never had the reading habit, nor, for that matter, any habits of leisure. She had thought that life meant service and now there was nothing to do. It was harder for her to go out because she walked very slowly. There were fewer places to go, fewer friends, fewer Yiddish shops. People would stare, embarrassingly, at Grandma's *sheidel* and Grandma hadn't learned to speak English very well. Mrs. Rosen spoke with an accent, but that was different; people could hardly understand Grandma.

There was always lots of company in the house and Grandma liked young people, but there was so little to say to them. Unless she knew them awfully well they couldn't understand her, or Yvette or Irving would frown at her attempts at conversation. Every one smiled at Grandma and shook hands, but that was all—it was more comfortable to stay in her room, usually. There seemed to be fewer old people than there had been. Fewer seemed to live in Harlem, anyhow. In MacDougal Street and even in East 77th Street and the Bronx, Grandma had met old ladies, occasionally, people from her own village, and had had long talks with them, interrupted with nods and shakes of the head and tongue cluckings. Here it was different. She loved her family, of course, but she didn't seem to fit in. Darning stockings wasn't enough. Of course, Grandma was glad the family was doing so nicely—a fine big apartment with an elevator and a servant girl—and she had two new bonnets and her old one not nearly worn out yet—where did she go to wear it?—and her own room and everything she wanted. And Irving bringing her home candy she liked and Yvette singing for her— Grandma knew she ought to be awfully happy. Yet there seemed to be something—missing—

Mrs. Rosen grew to like the new apartment, though at first it had overawed her a little. But before long she belonged to two card clubs—she had known members of both of them when she lived in the Bronx. She even tried to persuade Rosen to learn euchre or bridge so that he could join a club that played in the evening. But Rosen didn't like "ladies' games."

There were some things about the new neighbourhood Mrs. Rosen didn't like at all. The neighbours seemed so cold and distant. As if she wanted to know them! Wasn't her husband the owner of a factory—with more money than any of them, more than likely? Yet they minced by her, as if they thought so much of themselves. Well, she could put on airs, too!

That winter Mrs. Rosen went to a beauty parlour for the first time. The women of her set were going, it seemed. It made your hair thicker to have it shampooed and waved, especially when it was starting to get grey. Though it did hurt a little, she grew used to manicures, too, after a while. Mrs. Rosen even considered dieting. But, after a few attempts she gave it up. Just the things she shouldn't eat were the ones she liked best. After all, she was forty-four, though she knew no one would ever guess it, and if at that age you are a little plump who is there to say anything against it? She bought a fur coat that winter, seal, of course, with a great sweep to it and a hat to match, with a curved feather. Now, let one of her neighbours say something! She knew she looked mighty fine—as good as any one in her crowd. Why shouldn't she? Wasn't her husband a well-known manufacturer?

Rosen wasn't quite as busy as he had been, though the Acme Pants Company was getting along splendidly. But with things in good condition there was time to spare. He could have spent more time with his family had he cared to but it seemed tiresome when he did. Irving annoyed him more than ever with his debates and argu-

ments. In the evening he fell asleep over his paper—he didn't care for other literature except an occasional trade magazine. He still played cards with a few old friends he had made when he first came to America, and who, like himself, had prospered. He kept his coat on in the evenings now, or wore the smoking jacket Carrie had given him. What if their friends came in—he had to look nice for their sakes, didn't he? There was a little room, off the living room, which the family spoke of as "Papa's den." There was a couch here, brought over from the Bronx, and a desk. Under pretence of being busy, Rosen would read in there, until he fell asleep.

## IX

The next year there was a great change in the Acme Pants Company. An opportunity came almost over night and he and Abrams, after long discussions—at the factory this time—joined the Rex Pants Company, McKensey and Hamberg, partners, and the four formed the Rex Suit Company, Gentlemen's Ready-Tailored Suits. Ready-tailored suits, it seemed, were more in demand every day. The four had capital enough to swing something good and to introduce a new name. Until then, most ready-made suits were mere trade goods. But a few firms had learned the value of a trade name and advertising, and Rosen and Abrams agreed with McKensey and Hamberg that there was room for one more and great possibilities in the idea. They rented an immense loft building and were soon making and selling a line of ready-made suits under the name of the King Brand. They hired an advertising man, giving

him an absurdly high salary, an office of his own, with a stenographer and all of that, and agreed to pay exorbitant rates to magazines just for the privilege of a half or a quarter of a page of blank space on which to advertise their wares. A few months later, tall, exquisite young men, in graceful poses, accompanied by impossibly thin young women or sporty dogs looked at you from the magazines under such captivating captions as "King's Suits for the Kings of America" or "Every Inch a King in a King Brand Suit."

Rosen was interested again. Here, expenses were mounting, though profits might mount, too. Now he could figure again, and plan and talk things over with Abrams. Abrams, however, was Abrams no longer. He was Adams, now. He had signed himself Adams when the new firm was organized. Even Rosen's name had changed—he dropped one more letter. The indefinite Abraham G. had been altered and he blossomed forth as Abraham Lincoln Rose, to the delight of his children.

Irving was going to Columbia. He had joined a debating club and even his mother had to admit that, at this time, he was pretty much of a bore. He even called his father "Governor" on occasions and twirled a cane on holidays. He was "getting in with fine people" and dined at the homes of new friends, bringing back stories of families who didn't interrupt when you were talking and who had servants who knew how to serve meals. He felt he was going to be quite important and he wanted his family to live up to him.

Carrie was going to a private school—the only kind of school suitable for rich girls. It was in Riverside Drive,

and she met some mighty fine girls there. Like Irving, she brought home stories showing the heights of other and the degradation of her own family. "—We are such rich people and still we never have anything."

Carrie objected to her name, too, it seemed. "Carrie" was such a cheap name. Nobody would know you were rich with a name like that. She was going to be Carolyn after this. Carolyn Rose was a pretty name, wasn't it?

Carolyn loved to spend money. She had decided that the family was really wealthy, that it was all bluff about hard times and saving. She wanted a gold mesh bag and got it before Yvette even knew there were gold bags in the world. Carolyn had a fur coat as expensive as her mother's, but with a smarter, more girlish cut. She disregarded the stupid idea, made up by some one who didn't have the money, probably, that diamonds were for older people, and persuaded her parents to give her a big diamond ring, set in platinum, for her seventeenth birthday.

Yvette's clothes were always a bit loud, too extreme, even cheap looking. Although she paid big prices for them they were still tawdry. Carolyn's tastes were not quiet, but she managed to look "expensive." Her hair was black and sleek and she knew she had "style." She liked collars a bit higher than any one else wore, when they wore high, a bit lower when low collars came in. She was no slavish follower of fashion, like Yvette. She added a bit of "elegance" to whatever fashion had dared to ask for. She liked smooth broadcloth suits, much tailored, for day wear, and elaborate chiffon evening gowns. She talked with an "accent" but not the kind her mother had. She said "cahn't" when she could remem-

ber it, and thought one ought to have "tone." She had languid airs.

Mannie was growing into a nice child. He was quiet and he started to read when he was just a little fellow. Now you could find him, any time, curled up with a book he'd brought home from school. He didn't care much for out-of-door games. He was the first of the family to have literary leanings, though Dorothy read, too, when she couldn't find anything that pleased her better.

Dorothy was petted and spoiled by the whole family. She got things even before she could think to ask for them. Because there was never anything for her to be cross about the family said she had "a wonderful disposition" though she had a pouting mouth and did not smile very much.

Dorothy was "a little beauty." Although the family kept always with their own race and declared, on all possible occasions, their great pride in it and their aversion to associating with those of other faiths, the thing that delighted them most about Dorothy was, for some unexplainable reason, that every one said "she looked like a Gentile." Mrs. Rose would repeat to her friends that people had said, "you'd never guess it—just like a Gentile that child looks." Her friends agreed and there was nothing in their minds but cordial congratulation over the fact. Dorothy had lighter hair than the others and grey eyes. She was a slender little thing, quiet, determined, impatient.

"We ought to have an automobile," she said, one day. That was in 1909, before cars had become as much of a necessity as they are now, and Dorothy was only twelve.

Two weeks later, after many hugs, her father bought a car, a red one that would hold any five of them. Irving soon learned to drive it and later Carolyn and Dorothy learned, too. Grandma could never be persuaded to enter the car—it didn't look safe to her. Mrs. Rose rode, but it was always sitting stiffly erect with unrelaxed muscles. Rose asked Irving to drive him places, occasionally, when he was in a hurry. He never liked the automobile except as a convenience.

That year Grandma died. She was sick only a few days and didn't complain even then. The doctor came and fussed over her and finally a nurse came, but Grandma persuaded her daughter to send the nurse away. Grandma seemed quite content to die, and though the family was fond of her, her going did not cause any undue emotion. Mrs. Rose wept loudly at the funeral and Rose looked unusually solemn in the weeks that followed. He had been very fond of Grandma and had appreciated the little things she always loved doing for him. But, after all, as Mrs. Rose would say to her husband, "it ain't as if she was a baby at 72. It ain't as though Mamma ain't had everything money could buy these last years. A grand life she's had, nothing to do and her own room and all. Many times she spoke of it. It's good we was able to give it to her. She was a good woman but now she's gone and I can say I ain't got nothing to reproach myself for."

## X

In 1910, when Yvette was twenty-four, she became engaged to marry MacDougal Adams. Already Mac-

Dougal was sales manager for the Rex Suit Company, and he was doing well. He had grown into a handsome fellow who would be quite fat, one day, if he didn't diet carefully. He was crisply black-haired, ruddy-faced. He made friends easily and was jovial most of the time. He had no subtleties, but Yvette was not the one to notice. She considered him very modern, and liked the way he "caught on to things." Her friends—and the announcement Yvette mailed to the newspapers—spoke of the affair as "a childhood romance," as indeed it was. It pleased the Roses and the Adams, too. They gave a reception at a hall on 125th Street to celebrate the occasion, each of the families inviting special friends, with Dorothy and little Helen Nacker to pass flowers to the guests. There was a band behind artificial palms, and waiters in white aprons passed refreshments. Yvette wore a dress of pink and Carolyn wore yellow. Carolyn didn't think the party fine enough, and Mannie and Dorothy didn't like it much, either. The rest of the family thought it a successful affair.

Mrs. Rose, Yvette and Carolyn spent the following weeks shopping. Yvette had to have a complete trousseau, starting with table linens and ending with silk stockings. Three months later Yvette and MacDougal were married at the Waldorf with Carolyn and Maurice Adams as attendants. Only the most intimate friends were invited to the elaborate banquet which followed, though later there was an "informal reception" with much wine. MacDougal had just bought an automobile—black, though Yvette would have preferred a gayer colour—and, after a short Atlantic City honeymoon the young couple

took a new and elaborate apartment in Central Park West and settled down, with two maids, to domesticity.

"Ain't it grand, Papa?" Mrs. Rose had said to her husband after their first call on the young couple. And even Rose had to agree that Yvette was getting all that could be expected.

Carolyn was "the young lady of the family," now. She was not as easily satisfied as Yvette had been. She called Yvette's crowd "loudly vulgar," though she was a trifle loud, herself, at times. She raised eyebrows and drew away when fate included her in her sister's parties. She was glad when her sister married—now she could entertain her loud friends in her own home. Maybe Yvette would even tone down a little; she laughed too loudly, and her terrible taste in clothes! Her mother talked loudly, too, except when she tried very hard to remember—and it was terrible the way she shrieked and singsonged when she grew excited—but at least you could remonstrate with her.

The Harlem apartment didn't suit Carolyn at all. Here she was, out of school, nearly twenty—and living in—Harlem. She had gone to a series of morning lectures at one of the hotels and one of the lectures had been on furniture—it seemed all of the things in the Harlem apartment were entirely wrong. Carolyn knew this was true, too. Hadn't she been to other homes, where people knew things? They were rich and had one maid—and she didn't know how to wait on the table—and the family treated her as if she were one of them. And Irving talked back to his father, rather impudently, even when company was there, and the car was a sight—she was

ashamed to use it. The least they could have was a new car and a chauffeur.

Irving agreed with all of Carolyn's criticisms, excepting those which concerned himself. He was twenty-three, why shouldn't he have things nicer? Dorothy, going on fourteen, also found the Harlem house distasteful.

"A terrible neighbourhood," said Dorothy, who became Dorothea, that year. "It's too far from school and we do need a new car. I'm ashamed to tell any one where I live. I want a big room and my own bath, so I can ask girls to stay all night, if I want to."

Rose sighed, said the family would break him and times were hard. Mrs. Rose sighed, too. Still, Harlem wasn't such a friendly neighbourhood—the other couldn't be worse. And with only one girl there was too much for her to do. If they had a man to drive the car and a cook, maybe—

Carolyn went house-hunting alone. She said she'd take the others with her "when she found something." Two weeks later she took her mother and Dorothea to see the new apartment. It was a foregone conclusion with Carolyn that they would take it—just the formality of mailing the lease for her father's signature.

The apartment was on Riverside Drive, in a huge building of cream-coloured brick. At the door was a negro uniformed in dark green, and another similarly clad attended the mirrored elevator. The halls had Oriental rugs and were lit and draped with an expensiveness that suited even Carolyn. Of course it was pretty far out on the Drive—but it looked rich—and living on the Drive

was rather grand, at that. Mrs. Rose was speechless at first, but later the apartment seemed quite satisfying. She liked the ornateness, the grandeur—it was even finer than Yvette's, than any of her friends. Why shouldn't it be, with Abe a partner in a big factory and all—?

The woodwork of the apartment was white enamel. There were little panels in the living room, waiting to be papered, and the dining-room had a white enamelled plate rail. The lighting fixtures were of the new "inverted" style, on heavy brass chains ending with carved brass holders of white frosted globes. There were French doors of mahogany leading into the living-room and dining-room, a huge butler's pantry with numerous shelves, a kitchen with a big hooded range and immense white sink, large bedrooms, four baths.

"If—if your Papa will pay for it," Mrs. Rose admitted weakly.

"Oh, he'll pay," said Carolyn, "why shouldn't he—a rich man like him?"

When the men of the family came to see the apartment Irving pronounced it "immense." Mr. Rose looked at the apartment, saw the library that he could have for his own, the big bedroom and bath—and gave in with unexpectedly little persuasion. After all—his friends were living well—why shouldn't he? He was making money—the family might as well spend it. Didn't the way you live show how well you were doing? Not that he was making so much, of course, but, with Yvette married—if Carolyn wanted the apartment.

Mannie and Dorothea were rather indifferent. Still, Mannie was in prep school and cared most about books—

even writing a poem occasionally. He was eighteen. At fourteen, Dorothea didn't care about details as long as they were moving. Her new room was nice and big. Still, they ought to have a new car—Dorothea was quite pouty over the old one.

Carolyn took charge of the furnishings of the new apartment. Mrs. Rose, with uplifted hands, declared her ignorance of periods "and such nonsense," but begged her daughter not to spend too much money. "You know your Papa. There is a limit even with him."

Irving gave a long-winded dissertation about what to get and told about a fine apartment he had visited, farther down on the drive—two girls he knew, their father was a criminal lawyer. Carolyn didn't listen very closely. She knew what she wanted.

Accompanied by her most intimate friend, Eloise Morton, daughter of S. G. Morton, the box people (both of Eloise's parents had been born in America), Carolyn visited a number of shops. She called the stores where Yvette traded "middle class," but she was afraid of the decorating shops and called the things in the window "junk."

"You might like that old stuff," she said to Eloise, "but I can't see anything to it. Old chairs, stiff and funny—a hundred dollars apiece and then a fake, probably. A whole room full of that doesn't look like anything. I like things that show their full value, that you can tell cost a lot of money."

Eloise agreed that her friend had the right idea.

Carolyn didn't allow any mere furniture clerk to suggest or dictate to her. Hadn't she seen a lot of fine

homes? Didn't she go to every new show in town and look especially at the stage settings? Hadn't she heard a furniture lecture? Who could advise her?

She didn't want her mother with her, she'd "simply spoil things if she started to talk." Carolyn and Eloise, alone, could give an impression of taste, elegance and riches.

Carolyn decided on Adam furniture for the living room. If the ghosts of the brothers Adam groaned a bit Carolyn was too busy to hear. She liked "sets" for the living rooms—didn't every one have them?—so she chose a great davenport of mahogany with cane sides and back, motifs slightly after some of the Adam designs scattered over the woodwork. The upholstery was rose velour. There were two huge chairs of similar design, one a rocking chair. Other chairs were of cane and mahogany, one a Venetian, one a fireside. There was a great oblong table, too, that Carolyn knew showed good judgment, for it was of "dull antique mahogany." It, too, bore motifs of the house of Adam. There was a floor lamp with a rose shade and two table lamps to match and several pieces of "stylish" painted furniture, factory made. Carolyn looked with scorn on the little rugs that had seemed so fine a few years ago. She chose now an immense Oriental in rose and tan for the living room and a Chinese rug in dark blue to combine with the intricately carved Queen Anne furniture of the dining-room.

There were elaborately patterned filet lace curtains throughout the house. Before this Mrs. Rose had always hemmed and hung the curtains. Now Carolyn gave orders for them. The over-drapes and portières were of

rose velour, heavily lined, and above the windows were elaborate valances, edged with fringe and wide gold braid. There were blue velour curtains in the dining-room.

In the bedrooms Carolyn's imagination had full play. Her parents' room was in mahogany with twin poster beds. Her own room was in ivory, cane inset. Dorothea's was white enamelled, painted with blue scenes.

For the walls of the living-room, between the panelling, Carolyn chose a scenic paper in grey. On this were to be hung elaborate oil paintings in scalloped gold frames: "A Scene at Twilight," "The Fisherman's Return." In the dining-room the paper was in tapestry effect, red and blue fruit and flowers.

The family moved into the new apartment in October, 1911. The moving was simple for the old furniture was to be sold and professional movers attended to the packing of ornaments and dishes.

Mrs. Rose and Irving were impressed with the effects wrought by Carolyn's taste and her father's money, but it did not take the family long to settle down to the pleasures of life that Riverside Drive opened to them.

## XI

Moving to the Drive, the Roses made the final change in their name. Mannie, usually quiet, was the one to propose it.

"Rose is so—so peculiar," said Mannie. "Any one could tell it had been something else, Rosen or worse. I'm eighteen and go to College this fall. I'm not going to have a name so—so ordinary. Let's change it to

Ross. That's not distinctive but it isn't queer or foreign. I'm changing my first name just a little, too. I've never been called Emanuel, anyhow. Mannie isn't a name at all. I'm going to register at College as Manning Ross."

There was no letter-box to announce the change, but the elevator man knew the new occupants of Apartment 31—he wrote the names down with a blurring stub of a pencil to be sure to remember them—were Mr. and Mrs. A. Lincoln Ross, the two Misses Ross and two young men, Irving and Manning.

The family had liked Rose—but there might be something in what Manning said. But no more changes. Mr. Ross put his foot down, this time. He was meeting important men in business, Gentiles, and he didn't want any more monkey-business about names. Ross was all right and Ross it would have to stay. And it did.

Mrs. Ross took great delight in getting her new servants. It made her feel superior and important, driving up to an employment agent and interviewing prospective retainers. She took Carolyn along for advice and counsel—Carolyn went out a lot and knew about such things.

Carolyn would have liked a retinue, but Ross rebelled —expenses were awful and each servant was another mouth to feed. The old "girl" had got married so they finally chose a cook who was not above helping with other things, a waitress who could combine housework with waiting, and a chauffeur. Besides, the washerwoman would still come for two days each week.

Soon after the family was settled, Mr. Ross bought a big limousine, American made, but one that Carolyn thought looked really expensive. The chauffeur was in

uniform, of course. He happened to be a young Irish boy and it seemed to Carolyn, sometimes, that he smiled a bit sarcastically and annoyingly as he held the door open for them, especially after her mother had spoken with an accent or her old sing-song.

Mr. Ross didn't object to the new luxuries. It was much more comfortable driving to the office in the limousine than waiting for Irving or one of the girls to take him or depending on less comfortable modes of transportation. He had more room to himself, too. He liked the way the new cook prepared things—he was getting indigestion and had to be careful about what he ate—though he still remembered with real emotion the pot-roasts and fish and stuffed goose that Grandma had delighted to prepare. These new dishes—salads and things like that—everything served separately—you could get used to it—it didn't make much difference—here he was, used to a maid in cap and apron, waiting on table—and Minnie used to it, too, excepting when she forgot and talked to her or reached across the table for things. Still, Minnie meant well, a good woman, rather fat these last years, but a good woman who loved her family—none of this new foolishness some of the women had, he'd noticed—

Mr. Ross didn't pay much attention to women. He never had. He saw what fine girls his daughters were, that was about all. He couldn't have recognized half a dozen of their best friends, whom he saw constantly at his home, if he had passed them on the street.

His business—that was something. Still, even that didn't keep him busy, the way it used to. This new ar-

rangement, the offices and the factory separated—of course it was for the best. He could always go over to the factory when he wanted to, though there wasn't much need—machinery he didn't understand, everything in such order—with a head for every little department, not to mention the big ones. And, with three partners you couldn't say things as if it were your own business. Mr. Ross was fifty-three, but it hadn't been an easy fifty-three years and things had gone along rather rapidly for a while. Not that he was an old man—far from it. Still, things that had passed seemed pleasanter than they had seemed in the passing—and things to come lacked lustre.

This wasn't age,—certainly not—he felt as well as he had twenty years ago, practically. Give him some real work to do, you'd find out. But there was so little to do, now. You'd go down to the office about ten and dictate a few letters and potter around with things. You'd examine "swatches" and find that an expert had already given them a chemical analysis. You'd go to luncheon and be careful about what you ate. After luncheon, a little sleepily, you'd dictate more letters, if there were any more and see a few men on business, young upstarts, most likely, or Gentiles who wanted something for nothing—or consult with your partners. Then, you'd drive home after a while and read the paper or listen to Carolyn play on the new player piano or talk with Dorothea, though there wasn't much to talk about. Dinner then, and a game with Adams, though he had rheumatism these last years and wasn't the man he had been. Or Moss would drive over. There was a club, even, if you cared to go to it—a lot of strange men who didn't care any-

thing about you—a club—at least they were of your own race—Dorothea was always asking questions about why the family didn't mix with other people—such notions a child gets—

The Rex Suit Company was still progressing. The great factories were outside New York, but the business offices occupied a whole floor of an office building, each partner with his own mahogany furnished office, with its rows of bells and its private stenographers. There was an expert to decide each thing. MacDougal was in the sales department and Maurice, the younger Adams boy, was advertising manager—a big advertising agent had charge of all of the advertising, of course. And what advertising the firm did, too! Double pages in the popular weeklies at thousands of dollars a page. Every one was familiar with the "Kingly Men." Girls cut them out and mounted them for their rooms. "America's Kings in Kingly Suits" had been familiar enough to get applause at a musical comedy when it was used to introduce two juveniles. "Every Inch a King for the Kings of Creation" and other well-known slogans ran in letters four feet high above the artist's conception of the "Kingly Man" on the billboards.

Each year there was an ornate catalogue of the styles, "for the Prep Youth," "for the College Man," "for the Younger Set," "for the Older Fellow." Hundreds of merchants all over the country displayed King Brand signs and carried King Brand suits. The Rex Company had invented half sizes, adjustable models and the giving with each suit of an extra bit of the goods and two extra buttons for mending. There wasn't much you could plan

about for the Rex Company. Likely as not, some one else would have thought of it first, anyway.

Mr. Ross was accustomed to meeting men, now. He liked to meet them, in business. He would listen, weigh what they said, learn from them. He never talked much. He always retained his look of severity. He was known as "a crackerjack of a business man," "a man you couldn't put anything over on," but the other partners were good business men, too. There was nothing for Mr. Ross to work for.

Outside of business he had little. His family still seemed apart, yet he would have done anything to have saved them trouble or pain. He liked Yvette because she was frank and lively, but these last years he liked Dorothea, too, though there was nothing against Carolyn, a fine girl, if she did like to spend money. Minnie was all right—the boys would be, too, when they got a little older and settled down.

Mr. Ross didn't mind listening to the mechanical piano or the Victrola at home, but he did not care for other kinds of music. Concerts made him miserable and fidgety. He saw nothing in them and after several for charity and one visit to the opera he refused to partake of music outside of the home. He had never learned to like reading. He was still content with the daily papers and glanced, occasionally, at a weekly devoted to current events. He knew nothing about art and said so. He didn't want to be bothered with "such notions." Drama of all kinds bored him and even musical comedies entertained him only for a little while. Usually he got to

thinking of business in the midst of things and lost all consciousness of what was going on.

Mr Ross had no social ambitions, so, with no business worries and no outside interests, his days began to drag unpleasantly. He thought often of other days, of "the other side"; when he had been planning to come to America—he was glad that was over—of MacDougal Street, the hard work he had done there, the long hours, the overtime, the little economies so both ends would meet, then the newer tenement, with things a little easier, the beginnings of the factory—those had been real days—staying awake planning to meet bills, figuring to the dollar how to get money to pay the "help" and have enough left for living expenses, then Harlem and now Riverside. It was good to have planned and worked. Still, now he was used to his comforts. He liked space and quiet and the car—but, with nothing to do—

Mrs. Ross had long since relaxed her anxiety over her husband. He had never talked business and he seemed just like always, willing to listen to her stories of how she had spent the day. Mrs. Ross was quite content with the Drive. The aloofness of the neighbours, that had been disagreeable to her in Harlem, became one of her own characteristics now. She became more and more aware of her own importance. She had disliked the way "outsiders" and Gentiles had treated her, years before. Now, her last vestige of humbleness gone, she felt herself more than "as good as any one." Wasn't she Mrs. A. Lincoln Ross, wife of Ross of the Rex Suit Company, a real figure in New York? Didn't she get her picture in the

paper when she gave money to charity? Didn't people treat her with respect as soon as they found out who she was? She was frankly fat, but she didn't mind. She had expensive dressmakers and tailors and she thought the results of her toilet satisfactory. After all, she was nearly fifty.

Her voice had toned down, during the years, as had Yvette's. When talking with those she considered important, she even tried to put an elegant swing into her sentences. Usually, though, her voice was accented, ordinary, uninteresting. She still made errors and sometimes quite a lot of sing-song crept in.

In the morning Mrs. Ross attended to her household affairs, giving directions to the servants, ordering her own provisions over the telephone, even planning meals. She looked into the ice-box to see what provisions remained, rubbed fingers across furniture for dust, examined linens. She was a good housekeeper. In the afternoon, with Yvette, whom she found most congenial, or an acquaintance, she went for a drive or shopped. She dropped most of her old friends who had not progressed and she had no sentimental regrets concerning them. A few earlier friends she kept up with, asking them for luncheon or for a drive, with a hint of patronage. Through her daughters she met other women of her own age and circumstances. To these she tried to be pleasant, using her best language and manners. She had no intimacies with these women.

During the second year of the family's residence on the Drive, Mrs. Ross was asked to belong to several committees of important charitable organizations. She

joined these gladly and gave generous sums. She liked the society of her own race. She did not feel at home with "outsiders" nor know what to say to them—she felt that they were constantly criticizing her. She had decided social ambitions, however, and wanted Mr. Ross to join a well-known club composed of members of his people. She was proud to know women who, a few years ago, or even now, were she less wealthy, would have ignored her. To the arts she was as indifferent as her husband.

XII

Irving was a lawyer now. He had a nice office in one of the newer buildings devoted to professional men, but not much practice. His father found it just as convenient to give him some of the smaller business of the firm as to increase his allowance. When anything important came up Mr. Ross agreed with his partners that it was best to let a better-established lawyer handle the case.

Irving—who became Irwin about this time—could have joined a large firm as a junior member, but he preferred independence. He didn't like to work hard or long and he had heard of the tasks performed by the younger members of big firms. He liked to waste time, browsing around book-stores, walking through the lobbies of hotels, calling on friends. He had a large acquaintance with women and had as many dinner invitations as he could accept. Wasn't he a great catch, a young lawyer with a rich father? And good company.

At twenty-five, Irwin still loved an argument. Although never a great reader, he liked to pose as one,

quoting well-known authorities, reading and talking about authors unknown to his hearers. His hair was always immaculately sleeked, though it had just a perceptible wave. He had his favourite manicurist at one of the larger hotels. He smoked an expensive brand of cigarettes, carrying them in an elaborate silver and gold case and fitting each one carefully into an extremely long amber cigarette holder before smoking it. He used affected gestures, pounding on a table to emphasize a point he was making. He still wore nose-glasses, now large lensed and tortoise rimmed, and from habit he held his head too high.

Irwin was proud of his acquaintance with half a dozen actresses of minor importance. These he took to teas, dinners and suppers, talking later as if the engagement had had special significance. He was careful about his acquaintance with other women, chosing those that were, to him, of social importance. He had the same distrust his parents had for those outside of his own race. He never attended services at a synagogue, but to him religion and race were intermingled and he did not attempt to differentiate between them. Since boyhood he had suffered from prejudice far more than his sisters. He was proud to associate with "outsiders," liked to think he looked and spoke and acted like one of them. But he would never have married a Gentile.

Carolyn was now the liveliest member of the Riverside Drive household. She didn't think much of race and creed. She envied other women in some things, but she thought herself all that was desirable and attractive. She liked best the people of her own race, but she pre-

ferred them with American or English accents, appearance and accomplishments. She liked to associate only with people of great wealth. Always gowned a bit ahead of fashion, perfectly groomed, silky, smooth, crisp, she went to the theatre, evenings and matinées, to luncheons and to parties, giggling and laughing, quite moderately, of course, and had a gay time. She loved musical comedy and after-theatre suppers. She didn't care for the opera, but even the most serious drama could give her something to giggle about afterwards. Her hair and eyes were dark with something of the Orient about them, but her skin was fairer and clearer than her mother's or Yvette's, her round little nose was always white with powder and her eyebrows narrow and smooth, her lips and cheeks pinkly attractive.

You could see Carolyn almost any fair afternoon on the Avenue with Eloise or Helen or Mary Louise, stopping in at one little shop for a bit of lingerie, at another for flowers. They spent money with no thought of its value. Most of them could not remember poverty. Those who could found spending the best method of forgetting. Occasionally they met several of "the boys" for tea. When they didn't they bought tea for themselves at Maillard's, usually, or the Plaza. There was always a car waiting and they wore low pumps or slippers and the thinnest of stockings even when the snow was on the ground.

Carolyn "went with" Jack Morton, Eloise's brother. She had met Eloise at the Riverside Drive School. Jack was at Harvard, then, but he was graduated a year later and was "catching on" nicely in his father's box factory.

The Mortons thought the Rosses a step below them socially, for the Mortons were a little farther removed from "the old country." Outside of that, they liked Carolyn. So no one was surprised, when, in 1914, when Carolyn was twenty-three, she announced her engagement to Jack. The Rosses thought Carolyn had "done well," as indeed she had, for Jack Morton was a likeable fellow, full of practical jokes and fond of poker playing, but on the whole quite a desirable husband.

Ross gave his daughter a diamond lavalliere for an engagement present, and as Carolyn picked it out herself it was quite glittering. He promised her the furniture for her new apartment as a wedding present. The Mortons gave Carolyn a small car, green, with cushions to match, which she pronounced "a young wonder." They had an engagement "at home" and were married a few months later at one of the newer hotels. Carolyn hoped that it was quite evident to the friends of both families that they were both very wealthy.

The young couple took a three weeks' trip to Florida—Jack couldn't stay away from the business longer than that. Then they went to the Astor, but Carolyn wanted to entertain her friends and a hotel does keep you cooped up so. She and Jack finally decided on a small apartment in a high-priced new building in Park Avenue. They had only one maid to start with for they both preferred eating at restaurants. With the car you could eat at a different place and go to a show or some place every night.

Without Carolyn the Riverside Drive apartment

seemed quiet. Manning went to Harvard for a year, dissatisfied with the unexclusiveness of Columbia.

Dorothea liked school, too, and was now taking a few harmless courses which gave her something to do, though they didn't satisfy her. Nothing quite pleased Dorothea. She hadn't been satisfied with Carolyn's school—girls of only one creed went there, so narrow. Dorothea said that school was a joke. She had chosen a more expensive school, patronized by daughters of rich men generally. Her new study courses were at Columbia and with private teachers. Mr. Ross didn't like them.

"It isn't as if she had to be a teacher," he said. "A girl can have too much book-learning."

But Dorothea went. She had always been different. Her clothes, for one thing. Couldn't she have had anything she wanted? Look at Carolyn—always dressed like a picture—the family had to admit that, themselves. Even Yvette, though she liked bright colours, was a good dresser. It wasn't as if Dorothea was economical. She spent as much as Carolyn did. Carolyn wore things that "looked expensive," rich broadcloth, elaborate furs—Dorothea preferred rough tweeds. She paid extraordinary sums for little suits that Mrs. Ross thought looked as if she'd got them for twenty dollars in Third Avenue. They were of mixed weaves, in grey or tan, and she wore big tailored collars over her coats, not mannish looking or freakish, just plain. She paid fifty dollars for her little round velour hats. She wore heavy gloves and shoes, even when she went out with Carolyn, sleek in white gloves, thin pumps and furs. Dorothea paid huge

prices for plain little evening frocks which she bought at exclusive little places. Even then she was not satisfied.

Dorothea wore a perpetual little pout—something had always just gone wrong. She spent her time wondering what to do, dipping in "courses" on a variety of subjects, at settlement work, "going with people she didn't have to associate with," her mother thought. Clad in a trim-fitting habit she rode whole mornings in Central Park. She exhibited funny little Belgian Griffins at shows. She went to benefits and tournaments. Yet she was always a trifle "put out," a bit bored. Things weren't ever good enough, or quite what she had expected.

For her twentieth birthday Dorothea asked for and received a new car, a good-looking foreign-made roadster. About time the family had more than one car! She didn't want a chauffeur. Hadn't she been driving as long as she could remember, learning on the old red one? She liked driving the car best of all.

The family, the family's friends, what any one said or did—all displeased Dorothea. She made sport of Irwin's pet affectations to his face, to her mother's horror. She called Yvette's things "impossible" and made fun of Carolyn's diamonds. She treated her mother as a person of no consequence, never asking her opinion about things. Although she had nothing in common with her father, she made a great fuss over him and he grew to like her better than any other member of his family. She took him out in her car, though he didn't quite enjoy the rides, expecting to be tipped over at every corner. Dorothea drove perfectly, with the recklessness of a racer.

Dorothea went with "outsiders." She seemed as much at home with members of other races as with her own. She'd bring in unexpected guests, making the family feel ill at ease. While guests were there she'd bring up bits of family history the rest were trying their hardest to keep out of sight.

"Dad," she'd say, "here's some one that wants to meet you. He's heard a lot about you. . . . Can you believe that less than twenty-five years ago Dad came to America with no money at all?" then, with a little gesture and a smile, "and now look at him." She'd throw an arm around her father, who, ill at ease, would greet the stranger.

If Mr. Ross had been unsuccessful, he would have looked like any of a thousand of his race whom you can see leaving the shops any evening at the closing hour. But his wealth haloed him. It was impossible to separate him from his money. Thin, stoop-shouldered, solemn, quiet and accented of speech, he stood for success. To Dorothea her father was immensely important. She was the first who had ever made much of him. It embarrassed him—he was a simple old fellow in many ways—but he liked it.

Mrs. Ross thought Dorothea didn't appreciate her.

"It's always her Dad, her Dad," she'd say, "never a word about how I worked when she was small or all I do for her—just Dad this, Dad that—and Irwin don't like it—that you're always bringing up old times, about Papa being a cutter. The other night when that fine Miss Tannenheim was here, you said it, when you was talking to that big blond fellow you brought in. . . ."

"You're a dear, Mother," Dorothea would give her mother the tiniest touch of a kiss on her broad cheek, "but Irv's a mess and he knows it. The Tannenheim person is a cheap old thing with a mean eye and she'll marry him some day, if he isn't watching."

"Dad," said Dorothea, one day, "let's move. You can't guess how sick I am of Riverside Drive."

"What's the matter? Haven't you got things nice here?"

"Nice—on the Drive?"

"We're always moving, it seems. Only four years ago . . ."

"I know, Dad. That's just it. A man of your position ought to have a home. Apartments are nothing. This one is simply awful. Riverside Drive is fearfully ordinary, vulgar—don't you think so? Such a cheap collection of the newly rich. Dad, you ought to have your own home in town, anyhow, and something permanent in the country."

XIII

The idea of a home appealed to Mr. Ross. He felt, now, that he had always wanted a real home. Dorothea called for him in the car and they explored the streets east of Fifth Avenue. Finally, without consulting the rest of the family, Ross bought a five-story house in East Sixty-fifth Street, just off Fifth Avenue.

"Mother will think this is terrible," Dorothea said as she kissed him, "but you and I like it, don't we? I know it cost an awful lot, Dad, but you can see it's really an investment. After it's made over a bit inside it will

do for a family home for years. Imagine you—after all you've done—not having a family home."

Ross really liked the house. It seemed almost—homelike. The rest of the family were not pleased. The married daughters—of course it was not their affair—but, they wondered if it was just the right thing. Of course nice people lived in houses, but none of their friends.

"That's why we bought it," said Dorothea.

Irwin "guessed it was all right." Manning was indifferent.

Mrs. Ross held up bejewelled hands and wailed.

"Oh, Dorothea, just as I'm beginning to get into things and can ask people here to a fine apartment on the Drive—an address I can be proud of—and here you buy an old house—I thought a young girl like you would want things swell—here we've got servants and all—"

"Don't you worry," said Dorothea, "it will be 'swell' enough—awful word. And as for servants—"

The family moved to the East Sixty-fifth Street house a few months later. Dorothea didn't run around after furniture as those of her family who had chosen furniture before her had done. She turned the whole house over to Miss Lessing, in Madison Avenue. Miss Lessing's corps of exquisitely minded young men came in, looked around, made sketches, brought drapery material and wood finishes, all of which Dorothea examined critically.

"At last we'll have some place we can ask our friends," she said.

The house in East Sixty-fifth Street was rather nice. It was done in English things, mostly, painted walls and rather soft taffetas. There were some big easy chairs that

could be pulled around, comfortably, in front of the fireplace. Perhaps because of its seeming simplicity and the plainness of the walls and carpets Mr. Ross liked it more than any home he had ever had. He felt it belonged to him. Mrs. Ross never liked it.

"It's too plain," she said, "nothing to it. No one would believe how much it cost you, Papa. Mrs. Sinsheimer has got an apartment on Park Avenue, just a block from Carolyn. Fourteen rooms. She had a decorator, too, but he got different things than this—gold furniture. It looks like something. We had a fine place on Riverside Drive and Dorothea drags us here, where there ain't even lights enough to see by, at night."

Still, Mrs. Ross found out, from what people said, that there must be something desirable about the new home. She even acquired a bit of the patter Dorothea used, pointing, with something like pride, to "a real Chippendale escritoire, one of the nicest examples in America," and "some Wedgewood plaques, three, from an original set of four, you know," and "of course, we are getting old and it's nice we can have a home where we can gather the sort of things we like, as a background."

Irwin didn't "think much of the place, myself," but it was a good idea, the old folks having a home . . . he was glad he didn't have to be ashamed of it, though, for his part . . . now, that country place Dorothea was talking about . . .

Yes, Dorothea had been talking about a country place. After they were settled in the new home, she continued to talk. They had five servants now—they wouldn't even need two sets—Dad could see how it took that many to

run any kind of a house—and they could just shut up the town house in Spring and open it in Fall. All the family could be there, too, Yvette and the new baby, and Carolyn and their husbands . . . "a real family together. Dad, a permanent family like ours ought to have a decent country place."

The country place was on Long Island, finally. Dorothea picked it out and put the decorations in the hands of the same firm of decorators, who did rather startling things with coloured wicker, chintz and tiled floors.

It was near a famous country club and Dorothea knew, as did the rest of them, that none of the men of her family could ever be admitted. It didn't seem fair to her, of course, and yet . . . Dad was a great one—there oughtn't to be any place Dad couldn't get into. But Dad didn't care. Though, from things he said, Dorothea knew he had felt things . . . expected them. He hadn't even hoped this much of life. Irwin didn't like being left out of things . . . and yet, Dorothea, looking at Irwin, hearing him argue in his rather nasal tone, gesturing with his long amber cigarette holder, couldn't blame members of the club, exactly. . . . It wasn't because of Irwin's race . . . maybe the members, themselves, weren't so wonderful . . . and yet there were her two brothers-in-law, one rather fat, both slow-minded, card-playing, a bit loud and blatant, always bringing money into the conversation . . . Yvette, loud, laughing, so heavy, mentally, Carolyn, with her cheap talk of money and spending . . . her mother . . . it wasn't fair to criticize her, her mother'd had a hard time of it when she was young, and yet . . .

Dorothea knew that, somehow, the men she liked didn't

belong to her race. Hamilton Fournier, now . . . of course, if she'd marry him, there would be an awful talk, lots of crying and going on about religion . . . that sort of thing. She could hear her mother . . . she remembered when Freda Moss married,—"He'll throw it up to you." Yet, if you are proud of your race . . . doesn't that . . . can you have a thing "thrown up to you" that you are proud of? It was a big problem, too big for Dorothea. She felt that she'd always had everything she wanted . . . she could keep on having . . .

The family settled down comfortably in the new home, Manning with them. He was going to school in town, now.

Mrs. Ross was getting to like the new home better . . . it wasn't Riverside Drive, of course, but people didn't look down on her here. She was even getting in with Mrs. Rosenblatt—now that she lived near her. That crowd—she didn't have their education, but what of it, she was richer than most of them. Who were they, to be so exclusive? Maybe, by next year, if she donated to their Orphans' Nursery Fund . . .

Mr. Ross's indigestion seemed a little worse. The doctor came to see him several times each week and he had to be more careful with his diet. There seemed to be less to do at the office. He could retire, of course, but that would take away the only interesting thing he had—the few hours at the office. He even tried outdoor exercise, but after one attempt, he gave up golf as impossible. He gave to organized charities rather liberally and was even appointed on a committee which he never attended—he knew it was his money they wanted. He would sit, as

he had always sat in the evening, falling asleep over his paper, or, bundled up beyond the necessity of the weather, he would climb into the car and spend a few hours with an old friend, or some one would come to see him, playing cards, as always. But a few of the old friends had died, another had moved away . . . there had never been many of them. He was just an old man, and lonesome, with nothing interesting to do or think about. . . .

XIV

Manning stopped school the year after the family moved into their new home. He had had a year at Harvard and a year or so at art school. Now, at twenty-two, he felt that he was a sculptor. His father was disappointed—Manning had started out a nice boy—it did seem that one of the boys . . .

But Manning shrugged sensitive shoulders at anything as crude as the clothing business, even wholesale. His soul was not in such things. And Mr. Ross had to admit that the position of model was about the only one in the establishment that Manning could have filled. Manning went in, rather heavily, for the arts that the rest of the family had neglected. Of course Dorothea read, but Manning thought she skimmed too lightly over real literature. And Irwin—an impossible, material fellow.

Manning wore his hair a trifle long. He talked knowingly of Byzantine enamels and the School of Troyes. He knew Della Robbia and the Della-Cruscans. There was nothing he didn't know about French ivories. He

knew how champlevé enamelling differed from other methods . . . there were few mysteries for Manning. His personal contributions to Wanty consisted of fantastic heads, influenced slightly by the French of the Fourteenth Century, in bas-relief—very flat relief, of course.

Manning's friends felt they formed a real part of New York's "new serious Bohemia." They ate in "unexploited" Greenwich Village restaurants, never complaining about the poorly cooked food, sitting for hours at the bare, painted tables, talking eagerly in the dim candle or lamp light. They expressed disgust when "uptowners" discovered their retreats and sometimes moved elsewhere. You could find them every Saturday and Sunday night in parties of from four to ten, at the Brevoort, sometimes with pretty girls who didn't listen to what they were saying, sometimes with homely little "artistic" ones, hung with soiled embroidered smocks, who listened too eagerly, talking of life and art, revolution and undiscovered genius.

There was no question that Manning's father should continue his allowance—there is no money in sincere art these days. Manning knew that even his father must recognize that. Manning spent his summer with the family on Long Island—it was hot in town. But, when one's family is of the bourgeoisie, it does draw one's energy so. In the autumn Manning decided he must have a real studio, some place he could work and expand, going to "the town house" for week-ends. Having one's family uptown was quite all right, of course—but you couldn't expect an artist to live with them.

Mr. Ross agreed to the studio. He was getting accustomed to Dorothea's friends, unbelievers though they were. He found he could not accept the artistic friends that Manning thought so delightful.

Manning found his studio, finally. The rent was terrific, of course, but the building had been rebuilt at great expense and was absolutely desirable in location, construction, everything. He furnished it himself in Italian and Spanish Renaissance things. Rather nice! When it was furnished—though they probably couldn't "get it" he'd let the family see it.

One Sunday, after a family reunion dinner, Manning announced that his studio was done. If the family liked they might all run down that way—a sort of informal reception . . . of course, they probably couldn't understand it all; . . .

It was in the Village, of course, but not "of" it. Did they think the Village was slumming? Uptown people did. But that's where you'd find real thought, people who accomplished things. . . .

"Why, my new studio has real atmosphere"—Manning ran his fingers through his hair as he spoke. "It's in a wonderful old building, magnificent lines and the architect left them all—it's just inside he's remodelled. I've the third floor front, two magnificent rooms, a huge fireplace, some lovely Italian things . . . and the view from the window is so quaint and artistic . . . of course you may not understand it . . . this family . . . it's just a block from Washington Square."

"Why, that's where . . ." began Mrs. Ross.

Irwin silenced her.

"Don't begin old times, Mamma. Most of us haven't as long memories as you," he said.

"Come on, now that we're all here, let's go down," Manning went on, "I want you to see something really artistic. A friend of mine, DuBroil—I think you've met him—did me a stunning name plate in copper, just my name, Manning Cuyler Ross. I'm so glad I took Cuyler for a middle name last year. And there is just the single word, 'masks.' I thought it was—rather good. And I've a stunning bit of tapestry on the south wall. Come on—you've got your cars here, we'd better get started—"

It was a pleasant drive. The three cars drew up, almost at once, in front of Manning's studio, as he, in the front car, pointed it out to them.

They made quite a party as they turned out in front of the building—a prosperous American family—Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln Ross, well-dressed, commanding, in their fifties, which isn't old, these days; MacDougal Adams, plump, pompous; Yvette Ross Adams, in handsome furs and silks; Jack Morton, sleek, black-haired; his always exquisitely gowned wife, Carolyn Ross Morton; Irwin Ross, in a well-fitting cutaway, eyebrows raised inquiringly, chatting alertly; Dorothea Ross, attractive and girlish in rough tan homespun, and Manning Cuyler Ross, their host, pleasantly artistic.

"Here's the place," said Manning. "No elevator, real Bohemia, three flights up, uncarpeted stairs. Come on, Mother."

Mrs. Ross was strangely pale, and on the faces of Yvette and Irwin and MacDougal Adams there were cu-

rious shadows. The rest, save for Mr. Ross, were too young to remember. As for him he broke, for the first time in years, into a broad smile. Manning went rattling on.

"This," he proclaimed, "is the way to live! None of your middle-class fripperies. Plain living, high thinking —this is the life!"

They came to the studio at last, and all stood about in silence while Manning explained its charms—the clear light, the plain old woodwork, the lovely view of the square, the remote, old-world atmosphere. In the midst of his oratory Mr. Ross sidled up to Mamma Ross and reached stealthily for her hand.

"Do you remember, Minnie," he whispered, "this room —this old place—those old days—"

"Hush," said Mamma Ross, "the children will hear you."

# AMY'S STORY

## I

WHEN Amy Martin was thirteen years old she read, in a book she had borrowed from the Fortnightly Library, something that interested her a great deal. She liked the thought so much that she accepted it quite thoroughly and kept it with her as a delightful secret. It was to the effect that each person's life is an interesting plot and that, if written out, it would make a fascinating story.

To Amy the idea opened up infinite avenues of adventure. Until then she had taken for granted her life in Belleville. Now, other things seemed just about to happen to her.

Amy was one of two children. Her brother Clarence was two years younger, a slow, shy, blond boy. Her father was a fat, soft fellow, with bushy reddish hair which stood up in a stiff halo from an always slightly red forehead. He had no chin at all, but he did have rather a thick neck, so that below his mouth his chin and throat formed a sagging, uneven line. He carried his head a bit high, and his prominent nostrils seemed as peering as his eyes.

Mrs. Martin was a neat, dark-haired woman, a trifle sleek and oily as to complexion and hair. She liked to spend her time mixing not particularly good cakes or

talking with her neighbours, taking hours to elaborate over trifles. She liked to give the impression of being always busy, though she kept one servant and did not do much of anything.

Mr. Martin was in the retail hardware business. On the front of his store and on his letterheads he used the picture of an ax, in red, with the irrelevant motto: "It Pays to Trade at Martin's." There was only one other hardware store in Belleville, so he had quite a good trade.

The Martins lived in Myrtle Street, one of the nicest streets in Belleville. The house was of clapboards, painted a cheerful yellow with white trimmings, and had a wide porch with a scroll-work railing. The yard had several nice fruit trees and a variety of bushes placed without regard to landscaping. The house was cut up into small and not particularly attractive rooms.

At thirteen Amy was a freshman in High School and already a recognized member of Belleville's "younger set," with dancing school Saturday afternoons, parties on Friday nights and many Christmas-week activities. After she read that every life is an interesting story, Amy began to visualize herself as the heroine of a definite romance, still without a plot, but alluring and pleasant. The thought became personal, immediately. She forgot that every other life in Belleville contained a plot for a story, too. The thought seemed to belong only to her. Life stretched out, fragrant with possibilities of living.

Crossing the street on an errand—to borrow a cup of sugar from Mrs. Oglesthorn—Amy noticed the shadow of a tree on the dusty street. She made up sentences:

"As Amy crossed the street, the sunshine and shade cast contrasting shadows on her—"

"Amy ran across the street, enjoying the warm sunlight—"

She made up frequent sentences. Why not? Wasn't she a person in a story? Wasn't anything liable to happen to her at any time? Often, after that, she thought of herself in the third person.

Amy's first year in High School was pleasant enough. She envied Luetta Corman when, in the Christmas cantata, Luetta was chosen Queen of the Good Fairies and wore white tarlatan and spangles, while Amy, as one of the Pleasant Dreams, had to be content with a silver-starred wand and pink cheesecloth. What did that matter? Later, she was going to live, to have important things happen to her. She could laugh at these little disappointments in Belleville.

The next year Amy had a real ambition. Because several people had praised her singing, she decided she had a good voice and should become a singer. The Martins had an upright and rather tinny piano, a symbol of small-town gentility, and Amy had had three years of piano lessons.

She had no talent or real love for music, and she hated to practise. She felt that learning to sing would be more pleasant than learning to play. She was rather a pretty girl, with light brown hair and indefinite blue-grey eyes. In her imagination she saw herself on the concert stage and in opera even, costumed in any of the rôles she could think of. On the stage she would find real romance.

Her vocal teacher came to her house for two half-hour lessons a week. She was not an inspired teacher, but Amy needed nothing better than Miss Patten could give. She hated scales and breathing exercises. But she sang, eagerly enough, sentimental songs. Those by Carrie Jacobs-Bond were her favourites. After six months of lessons she sang "Spring Rain" in a thin, uneven voice, noticeably weak in the lower register, at a pupils' recital. Her parents were quite proud of her.

Two months later she sang at a concert given for a local charity. On the program was a fairly well-known visiting soprano. This woman listened to Amy's singing, and when Amy eagerly asked her opinion about "keeping on with lessons," told her truthfully, though brutally, that she could never learn to sing.

Amy gave up her singing quite willingly. She had really lost interest, anyhow. She was becoming interested in boys. She had a chum now, Lulu Brown, a dark-haired, bright-eyed girl with rather boisterous manners, and they were reaching the giggling stage. They put themselves in the way of masculine attentions, invitations to play tennis or go walking, with a soda at the Central Drug Store as an objective.

Lulu was more attractive and vivacious than Amy, but her family was not as high socially. Lulu's father was a bookkeeper. In Belleville the "society set" was composed of the families of professional men and those who owned businesses. Lulu went with the same crowd as Amy, though her parents did not go into society. Amy was fond of her, but sometimes she was ashamed of her on the street, and she was always afraid that Lulu

would do something unconventional. If it had not been that boys sought Lulu's company and that Amy received many of her invitations through her chum, it is possible that she would have dropped her altogether.

The next summer Amy decided to be an artist. Three times a week, during vacation, she went to Miss Matson's "studio," the second-floor front room of the Matson home.

Miss Matson had had several years of study in New York. On the wall of her living-room there was a picture in oils that, it was said, had been done at the Art Students' League. Amy did not know just what this was, but she was impressed because of the name and because her teacher had studied in New York

Miss Matson's students could do two kinds of work, copying pictures or still-life. If they chose copying, they made meticulous replicas of fancy heads, usually in water-colour, imitating every curve and shadow, putting on daubs of red where the originator had put daubs of red, unquestioning. The homes in Belleville were filled with these pictures in elaborate gold frames, the work of Miss Matson's pupils. The "still-life" studies were groups of fruit or vegetables, a yellow mixing bowl, a red tomato and a green pepper, or, perhaps, a pitcher, two lemons and a slice of cake.

Amy copied pictures all summer. Then some one told her that this was not art, so she joined the still-life group.

So—she was going to be an artist. She tried to see colour in everything that year. She read the lives of the painters. She knew that years of hard work lay before her, but she felt she wouldn't mind that. She knew she would do something remarkable. Life was seizing her—

going to make an artist out of her—to think that her romance, her story—was coming out this way.

The next winter she went to High School and spent three afternoons a week, after school, with Miss Matson. At the end of the year she could do a "still-life study" of a couple of eggs, a mixing bowl and a bunch of radishes with fair skill. She went to parties and enjoyed them. She giggled with Lulu over the boys. But she felt that life stretched out beyond Belleville.

That summer she persuaded her father to let her go to a near-by city and take a summer course at an art school. She was only sixteen, but there were cousins with whom she could stay. Her mother and Clarence wanted to go to Benton Springs, near Belleville, where her father could go for week-ends.

Her father laughed condescendingly and told her that she could study, that he thought it would be very nice to have an artist as a daughter.

The art students were older than Amy and greatly in earnest. Amy lived near the school and worked hard. All summer she didn't pay attention to anything else. She always felt embarrassed when she met a model from the life-classes, wrapped in a bathrobe, waiting to pose. Amy was not in the life-class, but knew that drawing from the nude was all right "for art's sake." She even peeked into a life-class and pretended that she didn't mind, though she really felt that she was doing something wrong.

She attended a series of lectures and learned something about anatomy and the history of art. She even learned a little of colour and composition.

She found art a serious thing. She met men and women who had been working for five or six years—and still were doing charcoal drawings. She hated charcoal as a medium. Others spoke knowingly of schools of art and new interpretations, and these things annoyed and puzzled her.

At the end of the term she had done half a dozen drawings from casts, three compositions and a few outdoor sketches. She had thought of art as a way to produce pretty pictures quickly. She saw how inadequate she was for such a big subject and that she lacked ability and ambition. She was glad to be back in Belleville for the opening of High School. After all, life offered many things beside music and art.

II

Amy had a good time during her junior year in High School. She and Lulu were invited to all of the Friday night parties. She was not as good a dancer as Lulu, but she always had all of her dances taken. On Sunday she and Lulu and two of the boys would go for a walk, calling at the post-office for any possible mail and then stopping for sodas.

But that wasn't life. Amy wanted something above Belleville and High School parties and a father with a hardware store with red axes on its windows. She read a great deal of fiction that year—everything in the Fortnightly Library that had large print and wide margins. While she read she remembered that, to her, too, romance would come, that her life would be an interesting story.

She fell in love with Reed Maddon when she was seven-

teen. He was a tall, black-haired boy. His father kept a leather and harness store. He played on the Belleville High School football team and was rather shy. He didn't pay much attention to Amy, at first. It was pleasant, being in love with him. He sat back of her in the High School study hall, so she kept a little pocket-mirror in her desk and could find his face in it whenever she wanted to.

She tried to make Reed be nice to her. Lulu saw through her little tricks and laughed. Lulu, at seventeen, was already making eyes at grown-up men.

Amy dreamed of Reed, thought of him all day. Being in love seemed a beautiful prelude to living, to the story that was going to happen. She pursued Reed so patiently that finally he did pay a little attention to her. He took her to a couple of dances. One night, on the way home, he put his arm around her and, in the shadow of the climbing rose on the side porch, he kissed her.

His kiss lifted her into an ecstasy. She lay awake nearly all night thinking about it, about his hair, the curve of his cheek, the feel of his lips. She whispered "Reed, Reed, Reed," over and over. Only once more did Reed make love to her. That was a week later, when he came to tell her that he was going to St. Louis to work for his uncle. He put his arm around her as they sat in the hammock on the porch. Amy trembled delightedly. She never remembered what they said.

She thought of Reed all summer. He wrote her a couple of letters with no particular charm and sent her a poorly-taken picture post-card of himself, which she cut to fit her locket.

Amy went to the state university when she was graduated from High School. Lulu Brown went, too. Because of Lulu's inferior social position and a tendency to make amorous eyes at the boys, she was not asked to join a sorority. Amy was, and she gloried in her social supremacy, treating Lulu with great condescension, though they shared letters from home and frequently spent a night together. Lulu was more popular than Amy, but Amy thought some of the boys Lulu went with were "fast." She no longer regarded her as a rival and did not feel as jealous of Lulu as she had in High School.

Amy watched, eagerly, for something to happen. At first, she was in love with Reed, but the activities of the university made her a bit dulled toward him. A letter from him, around Christmas of her first year away at school, gave her only the smallest thrill. She could think of his mouth and his eyes with great calm. She rather missed not thinking about him.

Amy did not fall in love at the university, and no one fell in love with her. She went to dances and the other entertainments, treated the boys with the usual half-comrade, half-coy attitude of the other girls, and was fairly popular.

But this was not life, really. It was just waiting for things to happen. Things *must* happen. She felt that. She was going to have a real story happen to her—would probably have exciting adventures and meet a wonderful man and fall in love with him.

In the evenings, at dusk, she would sometimes get away from the other girls and take long walks by herself.

She would get so restless and eager for something to

happen that she wanted to cry out for it. Every new face might bring romance. She almost trembled when she passed any one or when she made a new acquaintance. She often woke up early, and, after trying to read, would lie in bed, half-awake, and imagine things that might happen.

Life—what did it mean? Would she fall in love again? Being in love with Reed had just been puppy love, of course. Was the real man only a little way off? Was she destined for great happiness or great unhappiness? Even that—

She learned little things about men, was even humble enough to profit by Lulu's wisdom, even while she disapproved of Lulu's unconventionality. Lulu seemed to know, instinctively, things that she had to learn.

Two years at the university, a smattering of history and French and German and literature, and Amy was home, ready for "society." She felt another ripple of triumph—Lulu's social position would not warrant formal social entrance—the Martins planned to introduce Amy with a party at the Elks' Club.

The party was quite a success. Mr. Martin, his chin and neck a bit more indistinguishable, Mrs. Martin, smooth and sleek, buttery almost, stood in the "receiving line," together with several "socially prominent" friends. Amy wore a white organdie that came from Chicago. There was Robinson's Orchestra and dancing. For supper, the local caterer had sent to the city for fresh lobster, a delicacy unobtainable in Belleville. The party was not surpassed by the other four débutante parties of the season.

Amy went to innumerable social affairs that winter. When a theatrical company came to Belleville she was always one of a box party, composed usually of the débutantes and four of Belleville's most desirable young men, all in evening clothes, the girls in dresses bought at the New York Store or made by Madame Jackson, Belleville's one modiste, the men in rather wrinkled suits, but unmistakably their own.

Something was missing, Amy felt that. Reed came back to Belleville, but he was not attractive any more. He went with Claudine Harper, and Amy did not care. Nothing thrilled her at all.

Sometimes, at a dance, an especially good dance with a good partner would awaken her just a little. A chapter from a popular novel could be mooned over half a day. A play sometimes had a moment which lifted her above things. She read poetry, and soothing rhythms pleased her. Sometimes she tried to write, but never achieved anything beyond a vague scribbling about longings and life and love. This was not living. She wanted to scream out, to batter down something which seemed to stand between her and the story that ought to be happening.

III

Amy went with her father and mother and Clarence on a trip to Niagara Falls, Buffalo and New York City. She pretended a great wonder over the falls, but in reality she did not care for the scenery.

In New York she felt something of the same emotion she had felt when, at the university, she had taken long

walks by herself. She wanted to thrust herself into the city, yet, she remained apart, aloof, watching it. Her father, who had been to New York before, took the family on tours of inspection, pointing with his cane—to Amy's embarrassment—the things of interest. Amy saw the tallest buildings, rode in the subway and busses and taxicabs, visited the museums and Chinatown. In Fifth Avenue she bought some frocks and hats for twice as much as she had ever paid in Belleville. In the lobby of their hotel, a commercial hotel of tremendous size, Amy glanced eagerly at the men who stood there, and thought she recognized famous faces, actors or writers or politicians. Once she even smiled at a man who seemed unusually handsome. He started to walk toward her and she became frightened and took the elevator to her room. On the street she wanted to know people, any of the busy, well-dressed crowd. There were men who looked as if they might be just the sort she liked to read about, clever, cultured. She did not meet any of them.

Back in Belleville, she took up her usual activities, telling of the theatres and show places she had seen in New York. Things seemed duller than ever. Men in Belleville were so definitely unattractive. She wished she lived in New York. But, even as she wished it, a fear of the city came over her. She realized how dreadfully lonely she would feel if she were there alone, how inadequate she was to fit into any of the groups she had seen.

That winter, by putting her mind to it, she became rather a good bridge player. She was made a member of the Hospital Board League and spent afternoons planning how to raise money for various hospital needs.

Lulu Brown married a man whom she had "picked up" in front of the Belleville House. It happened that he was a New York business man, in Belleville about the new cracker factory, and quite wealthy.

Amy went to the wedding in the small Brown cottage. She gave Lulu a small travelling set of imitation ivory. She envied Lulu in her blue going-away suit more than she had ever envied her before. The man Lulu married was named Fredericks and was a striking-looking fellow. Fredericks told about a New York apartment that he had taken for the winter. Lulu was married and going to live in New York. She—why she was richer and better-bred than Lulu and she had to stay in Belleville, and nothing happened to her.

Two months later Amy went to another wedding. Reed Maddon married Claudine Harper. Amy went with the crowd to the station to see them leave for Chicago on a wedding trip. She was surprised to find how little she cared. Outside of a breathless moment of jealousy she didn't really feel it at all. Yet Reed was the only man she had ever cared about. But, of course, that had been when she was a little girl. She would fall in love soon and life would begin.

Amy spent the next two winters in Belleville. She and her mother went to Benton Springs for the summers, and her father and Clarence, who was now a partner with his father, came up for alternate week-ends. Her father was more condescending than ever now, because she had not married. He was fatter than ever, and Amy did not like to look at his profile.

At Benton Springs Amy flirted with the men at the

hotel, colourless, small-town men who were trying hard to get pleasure out of an inexpensive holiday. She did not find them very entertaining. She attended the hotel dances on Saturday nights and went to another hotel for Wednesday evening festivities. She played tennis and golf.

She had a mild love affair with a young lawyer from Texas, and he kissed her one night as they were walking toward the hotel.

After she had gone to bed she thought about him. He was not the sort of man she had planned to marry at all. He did not attract her, but the masculine smell of his coat had been pleasant and he was not bad looking. Amy decided that, if he asked her to marry him, she would accept him. He did not propose. He left the hotel three days later. With the exception of a picture post-card, she never heard from him again.

Something like a panic seized Amy the next winter. The girls in her set were getting married one after another and new débutantes were appearing each season. Great adventures did not come to her. Even little things did not happen. She felt almost trapped. What if she were wrong about life, about the story?

She visited, with new clothes as aids, her mother's cousin in Harperton and her Aunt Ella in Demont. She had good times. Girls gave bridge parties for her. Men took her to parties. She did not have a love affair nor any other adventures. She felt she was just as attractive as other girls. They found beaux. Still, to others, she might seem popular, too. She got candy and flowers and invitations. It was just that nothing really came close

enough, love or marriage or any sort of happening. She still felt as if she were not really living, as if life were waiting for her, outside of some gate. She was bound to find it, if she waited.

She returned to Belleville in January, and the next month Millard Kenton came to Belleville on business. His cousins lived there, so he was included in the town's social affairs. Amy met him, as she always met visitors.

Kenton was attentive to her immediately. She disliked him at first. He was small and had brown hair which was getting thin at twenty-eight. There was nothing forceful or vital about him. His strongest opinions seemed to have no importance. Nothing he could do ever could have any significance, Amy felt.

Yet, because he liked her, Amy ignored Kenton's colourlessness and made herself as attractive as she could. She was slender and had nice eyes and hair and wore pretty, small-town, fluffy dresses.

When Kenton called, they sat in the living-room and talked or played bridge with other couples or went to the theatre.

Sometimes, when she was alone with Kenton, Amy looked at his indefinite, uninteresting face and wondered how she could keep on talking with him. What a bore he was! She liked him a little better, but felt that he was more insignificant than a man ought to be.

Kenton's home was in Minota, Oklahoma, where he was with an oil company. He went back to Minota and wrote to Amy on his business stationery in a small, slanting handwriting. His letters were colourless, too.

Kenton came back to Belleville in April and asked

Amy to marry him. She had encouraged him in little ways, listening with flattering attention to his opinions, answering his letters with half-finished sentences that were meant to show that she liked him.

Amy had never had a real proposal of marriage. She felt that the great romance, as she had dreamed it, would never come to her. But all the other girls were marrying. Being married would open new avenues. Maybe, after marriage, she would have adventures. If things did happen—she could leave Kenton any time she wanted to—

IV

They had a church wedding. Amy wore a very elaborate wedding gown and veil, and six of her best friends were bridesmaids, in pale green. Amy showed her artistic training by designing huge fans for the girls to carry, instead of the usual flowers.

Amy and Kenton went to housekeeping in an apartment in Minota, Oklahoma, which they furnished with huge overstuffed chairs and mahogany furniture.

Amy did not like Minota. It was an oil town and the smell of the oil permeated everything. Minota was a little smaller than Belleville and definitely newer and flimsier. She knew several former Belleville people there, so, after a first loneliness, a feeling of not belonging to any place, she settled down comfortably enough. Soon she was one of the set of "younger matrons" and went to bridge games and parties quite as she had done at home.

She missed Belleville. After six months she went home on a visit. When she got there she was at once

restless and dissatisfied and didn't know what to do. After she had seen her parents and her friends and had walked down the familiar streets, she was quite willing to go back to Minota again.

She grew to like Kenton a great deal. Now that she could read while he was at home or ignore him altogether, he did not bore her. They had so many things in common—their home, their friends—that at times he seemed almost interesting.

A year after Amy married, Millard, junior, was born. Amy had read and thought that motherhood was a thing apart, almost an exalted state. She welcomed it, frightened but eager. It left her much the same, without the ecstasy she had anticipated.

Two years later Mary-Etta came. Amy was very fond of her children.

When Millard was four Arnold Thompson came to Minota. He was good-looking and had the reputation of being popular with women. Amy encouraged him to notice her. The Kentons were living in their own home, now, a white bungalow, and they had a coloured maid who took almost entire charge of the children.

Thompson telephoned and asked to call one afternoon.

Amy sent the maid out with the children and dressed in a great flutter of excitement. Thompson came about four. They talked, and Amy listened attentively, though to her surprise, Thompson's conversation was just like the other men's she knew and did not interest her. She played a little on the piano. Before she knew it, Thompson had put his arms around her, was kissing her. She lay passive in his arms for a moment, even kissed him in

return. The thrill she had expected was not there. She felt cheapened instead. She pushed him away, not angrily, but rather with indifference, and told him "You'd better go."

For weeks after that Amy suffered keenly from remorse. It was the deepest emotion she had had in a long time. Kenton was so good—and she had let another man kiss her. What must Thompson think of her? If Kenton should find out? She was ashamed of herself. She was greatly relieved when, a month later, she heard that Thompson had left Minota.

Life in Minota went on pleasantly enough, punctuated with visits to Belleville and even a visit to New York, after a successful business deal. Kenton was doing well in business. The children were growing nicely.

Sometimes Amy felt the old desires, the wanting to live. She would grow restless and walk in her room, up and down, and long for something to happen. Then would come a reaction, a hope that nothing would take place to change her comfortable state as a nice little married woman.

Things did not change until Amy was thirty-six. Then Kenton took cold and died of pneumonia after only four days' illness. Amy grieved sincerely. She missed Kenton a great deal and told every one that theirs had been an ideal life.

She sold the house, and she and the children went back to Belleville to live with her parents.

In Belleville Amy took up, in a quiet way, the activities of the women of her age. Kenton had been insured. The hardware store with the red axes on the windows was

still prosperous. Amy's father was bald, now, and quite fat. Her mother was complacently busy about home and church matters. Clarence was married and had a home of his own. Life in the Martin home was comfortable, in a quiet, uneventful way.

Lulu Fredericks came through Belleville on her way to California and stopped for a visit with relatives. Amy was rather awed and resentful at Lulu's clothes and her grand manner and Eastern accent. Lulu had travelled in Europe even. Lulu, who had been of so much less importance in Belleville, had had adventures. And she, Amy, hadn't lived at all—nothing had happened.

Amy remembered the book she had read when she was a little girl, that had said that each person's life contains a plot for a story. It made her angry to think of it. Her life hadn't been a story. Nothing had happened to her. She was sorry she had read that book. If it hadn't been for that she would never have felt the way she did about life. She might have enjoyed things more, one at a time. Now, though she couldn't touch them definitely, she felt that she had missed pleasant things, or ignored them, because she had wanted bigger things, instead.

The author of that book had cheated her—life had cheated her. How could any one have written such nonsense? Amy knew there was no story in her life—in most lives. Yet she knew that there always would be people like Lulu to remind her of the fact that there were people whose lives were like stories, after all.

After the children were in bed, Amy sat at the window and looked out on the little lawn. The trees and the

bushes looked badly taken care of, neglected. She must see that the yard was fixed up, right away. Her life—it was all she had—it did seem too bad that nothing had happened to her—school—parties—marriage—babies—widowhood—nothing—no story at all.

# CITY FOLKS

## I

JOE and Mattie Harper lived in Harlem. They lived in a four-room apartment in the second of a row of brown, unattractive-looking apartment buildings—six of them just alike—in One Hundred and Thirty-second Street.

They lived in Apartment 52, which means the fifth floor, and there was no elevator. But the rent was reasonable, fifty dollars, and both Joe and Mattie said they didn't mind a "walk-up" at all—you get used to it after a while, and Mattie knew it kept her hips down. Then, too, by going to the fifth floor, you get a much better view, though why a view of the building across the street—another brown barracks of exactly the same age and design—is desirable, only Joe and Mattie and other similarly situated folks know. The air was cleaner, though, on the fifth floor—they felt that any one would know that.

One Hundred and Thirty-second Street, Harlem, lacked all outstanding features. If the street signs had suddenly disappeared, there would have been nothing to identify it, to pin it to—a bleak street, without trees, a fairly clean street, decent and neat looking (after the garbage man had passed and the tins had disappeared), wide enough to lack misery, narrow enough to lack grandeur.

We are about to have two meals with Joe and Mattie —the most important meals of their day, for Joe's lunch was usually a sandwich and a glass of milk at the Automat, or beans or a beef stew in the lunch room across from his office; Mattie's a glass of soda and a sandwich or a dish of ice cream, if she were down-town—it is a shame about the new price of sodas—a scramble of left overs from last night's dinner, if she spent the day at home.

Breakfast:

The alarm clock had buzzed at six-thirty, as it always did. It was a good alarm clock and had cost $1.48 at Liggett's, two years before.

Mattie's little dog, who slept in the front hall, had heard the alarm and scrambled into their bedroom with his usual yip of pleasure—he was rather deaf, but he could make out sounds as definite as the ringing of a bell and he listened for the alarm each morning. He was a nice fellow, a white poodle, overly fat, with red-rimmed eyes. If you didn't molest him nor try to pet him nor step on him, he wouldn't snap or try to bite you. Mattie and Joe were quite fond of him and took him for walks in Central Park on Sundays or around Harlem in the evenings. His name had, in turn, been, stylishly, Snowball, Snoodles and Snookums and had at last reached Ikkle Floppit, all of which he answered to with stolid indifference.

Joe had heard the alarm, had jumped up and turned it off, and had waked Mattie, who slept more soundly. Ikkle Floppit had jumped, wheezily, upon the bed and licked all visible portions of Mattie's face. Mattie, then,

had given up trying to doze again and had stroked the dog's uneven coat with a fond hand.

Toilets followed, rapid plunges into the dwarf-sized white tub with its rather insecure shower attachment—Joe talking while he shaved, about the office, the men who worked with him, his boss who didn't appreciate him, the weather that was still too warm for comfort, their friends, the Taylors, who they both agreed were too stuck up for words since Taylor had got his new job.

"His people aren't anything at all," Mattie had said, "awfully ordinary—and the way they do put on airs, you'd think they amounted to something. Why, my cousin Mabel knew his sister in Perryville, where they used to live, and she said they weren't anything at all there. And now, how they do go on with a maid and a car. They've never even taken us for a ride in their old car and they can hold their breath until I'd step into it. It beats all—"

And Joe, his face twisted for the razor's path beyond the possibilities of conversation, had grunted assent.

Now Mattie had completed the simple breakfast, six pieces of toast, buttered unevenly and a bit burned on the edges, as always, a halved orange for each of them, some coffee and some bought preserves with a slight strawberry-like flavour. She and Joe faced each other over the almost clean tablecloth—it had been clean on Sunday and this was just Tuesday morning.

The dining-room was small, lighted vaguely with two court windows. Even now, at seven-thirty, the electric light had been turned on in the red and green glass electrolier.

Mattie knew the electrolier was out of fashion, she would have preferred a more modern "inverted bowl," but this one was included with the apartment, so there seemed nothing to do about it. She would also have preferred mahogany to the fumed oak dining-room set, bought eight years before—she had bought the mahogany tea wagon with her last year's Christmas money from Joe, looking forward to the time when they could buy a whole new mahogany set.

Mattie was not at all a bad-looking breakfast companion, seated there in her half-clean pink gingham bungalow apron—she wore these aprons constantly in the house to save her other clothes. She was a slender, brown-haired woman of about thirty, with clear brown eyes, a nose that turned slightly upward, a mouth inclined to be a little large, rather uneven but white teeth—indefinite features, a pleasant, usual, hard-to-place face.

And Joe, across from her, was equally pleasing, with a straight nose and rather a weak chin, dark hair starting to recede just a little at thirty-three, sloping shoulders inclined a bit to the roundness of the office man.

"What's in the paper, Joe?" asked Mattie, already nibbling toast.

Joe, deep in the morning *World*, threw out interesting items—the progress of a murder trial, news of an airplane flight.

They talked about little things, a friend Joe had passed on the street the day before, the choice of a show for Friday or Saturday night—they tried to attend the theatre once each week, during the winter.

The door bell rang, three short rings. Ikkle Floppit

gave three asthmatic yips. Mattie threw down her napkin, sprang to her feet.

"I'll go," she said, as she usually said it, "you go on eating or you'll be late again. I bet it's nothing but a bill, anyhow."

She returned in a moment with a thick letter in her hand.

"From your mother, Joe," she said.

She knew the printed address in the corner of the envelope, "The Banner Store, General Merchandise, E. J. Harper, Prop., Burton Center, Missouri," the neat, old-fashioned handwriting, the post-mark.

Mattie and Joe had come from Burton Center, Mattie eight years and Joe nine years before. They had grown up together in Burton Center, one of the jolly crowd who attended the High School, went to Friday night dances, later were graduated into the older crowd, which meant a few more dances, went to the Opera House when a show came to town, had happy love affairs.

Joe and Mattie became engaged three years after Joe left High School, which was the year after Mattie graduated. Joe went to work at the Banner Store, under his father. But youth and ambition knew not Burton Center, so, a little later, Joe had come to New York in search of fortune.

He had not obeyed the usual law of fiction and forgotten Mattie, nor had Mattie changed while she waited. No, though Joe found neither fame nor fortune, he did get an office job that looked as if it might support two in comfort, if Mattie and Joe were the two concerned, took a vacation, went back to Burton Center, found Mattie

even more alluring and dimpled and giggling than he had remembered her—how much prettier Burton Center girls looked than those in New York!—and they were married.

Eight years, then, of New York, of subway rides, of the weekly theatre, the weekly restaurant dinner, of apartment hunting about every second October, of infrequent clothes buying, of occasional calls on stray acquaintances, of little quarrels and little peace-makings, weekly letters from home—little lives going on—

Joe tore open the letter.

"Gee, it's a thick one," he said.

Then:

"Well, I guess they are all well or ma wouldn't have written so much. Listen, Mattie."

Joe read the letter, a folksy letter—Mrs. Harper, senior, was well and so was "your father," as all mothers speak of their husbands to their children, in letters. She had seen Millie's mother a few days before and she was looking well and hoping to see them soon in Burton Center. The youngest Rosemond girl was engaged to a Mr. Secor from St. Louis, who was in the lumber business.

Then there followed, long and unparagraphed, something that made Joe and Mattie look at each other, hard and seriously, across the table. For Joe's mother had written something that they had always thought might be suggested to them but they had never discussed, even with each other:

"Your father isn't as well as he once was, nor as young, you know, and, though you need not worry about him, he is

eating and sleeping fine, even in hot weather, I think it would be better if you and Mattie came here to live. You could step right into the store and take charge of things as soon as you wanted to. It is not a big store as you know, but your father has always made a nice living from it and Burton Center is growing right along. The Millers have put up some new bungalows out on Crescent Hill, you'd be surprised to see how it has grown up out there, all of the young people are moving out there and with the new Thirteenth Street car line it is very convenient. The cottages are all taken but two, both white with green blinds and room back of them for garages and we could get you one of them if you wanted us to. The George Hendricks are living there and Mr. and Mrs. Tucker and the Williams boy, Phillip, I think that's his name, you used to go with. The new country club isn't far from there and you could play tennis after work, which would be good for you. I wish you could make up your mind at once, so you could get here before long or your father will have to get a man to help him, for he really ought to have more time to himself and take a nap after dinner, now that the season's trade is starting. Talk this over with Mattie and let us know as soon as you can. I hope you are keeping well in this changeable weather. Your father sends love to both and so do I.

"Affectionately, your Mother."

Mattie and Joe looked at each other, looked and looked and forgot their toast and coffee. But they saw each other not at all. Nor did they visualize One Hundred and Thirty-second Street, New York, drab and bare, nor even Fifth Avenue nor Broadway.

They saw a little town, with rows of old trees along its quiet streets, little white houses on little squares of green,

each house with its hedge or its garden or its hammocked lawn, peace, and the smell of growing things after a rain—

"What say, Mattie?" asked Joe. "Sound pretty good? Of course, you've always said you loved New York and I don't want to persuade you against your will. Perhaps you wouldn't care to move—still, Burton Center, we've got some good friends there—it'd be sort of fun, seeing the old crowd, belong to a country club, tennis, things like that, even managing the business. But, of course, if you wouldn't want to leave the city—"

Mattie, mentally, had far outdistanced him.

She clapped her hands, pleasantly excited.

"Joe can't you just see that little house—I bet it's awfully cute. Last summer, when we were out in the country, I certainly did envy people living in little houses—I get so tired of New York, sometimes. But I never wanted to say anything, knowing how much you liked it here. But that little house—we could sell all of our furniture except the tea wagon and the table in the living-room and my new dressing-table—it really would be cheaper to buy new things than to pay for shipping. And we could find out how many windows there are and I could get some new cretonne here—sort of set the styles in Burton Center. It sure would be funny, living back there and knowing everybody. Here I never see a soul I know in weeks, or talk to anybody. Honest, sometimes I get just hungry for—for people. The trouble is, we haven't really got anything here."

"I know," Joe nodded. "New York's all right for some people—if you've got money. It's a great city all

right, but we don't get anything out of it. I get so sick of being squeezed into subways night and morning—hardly standing room all the way home—and no place to go Sundays or evenings but a movie or a show or to see people who live miles away and don't care anything about you anyhow and who you see about twice a year. Burton Center will look awfully good—folks take an interest in you, there."

"You bet they do."

"And it isn't as if I've failed here. I haven't. I'm due for another raise pretty soon—but we aren't putting anything aside, getting any place. It isn't as if we were terribly poor. You look awfully well in your clothes on the street, but we are always having to skimp and do without things—we never have the best of anything, always cheap seats at shows or cheap meals in second-class restaurants, a cheap street to live on—it gets on a person's nerves."

"Why, I didn't know you felt that way, Joe. I thought you liked New York. Why, it makes me so jealous, going down Fifth Avenue, seeing all those people in limousines, not a bit better nor better looking than I am, all dressed up, lolling back so—so superior, with nasty little dogs not near so nice as Floppit—and with chauffeurs and everything. Why, in Burton Center we'd be somebody, as good as any one. We could fix up that house awfully nice—and have a little garden and all that. But you said you hated the Banner Store so—now don't go and make up your mind—"

"You needn't worry about me. The Banner Store is all right—I think differently about things than I did

years ago. I thought the city was just going to fall apart in my hand—but I found someone else got here first. I'm not complaining, you know. It isn't that I've failed—why, in Burton Center they'll look at us as a success, we'll be city folks, don't you see. They know I haven't failed. I didn't come sneaking back the year I left, the way Ray Wulberg did. No, sir, when folks came to New York to visit, we showed them a good time, took 'em to restaurants and shows—they think we got along fine here—that we're all right—"

"You bet they do, Joe. But I just can hardly wait to see that cottage—and everybody. I bet Crescent Hill is awfully pretty. To-night, you write to your mother—don't make it too sudden, you know, or too anxious—for you know how she is—she means fine, but she'll like to spread the news about us coming back. You just say that, under the circumstances, as long as your father is getting old and needs you, you feel it's your duty to go there and as soon as you can arrange your affairs and resign your position and train one of your assistants so that he can take care of your work—"

"You leave that to me. I can fix that part up all right."

The buzzer of the dumb-waiter zinged into their talk.

"Joe, there's the janitor. It's late. You'd better hurry. You know the call-down you got last week for being late."

Mattie and Joe arose simultaneously, Joe grabbed his paper, folded it conveniently, hurried to the door, Mattie after him.

"Going down-town to-day?" he asked.

"Thought I would, when I get the house straightened up. I want to look at a new waist. My good one is starting to tear at the back."

"All right. I'll be home early, about six-thirty—won't have to stay over-time. In a few months, I'll be my own boss, no hurrying off in the morning or rushing home in subways—we'll fix that letter up to-night."

He brushed off his mouth with his hand and gave Mattie the usual and rather hearty good-bye kiss and, closing the door behind him, Joe and Mattie parted for the day with visions of little houses nestling in green gardens uppermost in their minds.

II

Dinner:

Dinner times with the Harpers varied slightly according to the way Mattie had spent the afternoon, the amount of work at Joe's office and where the Harpers were dining. They usually dined at home, but, once a week, usually Saturday, when they followed the feast with a visit to the theatre, they ate at one of the table d'hote restaurants some place within ten blocks of Broadway and Forty-second Street.

They thought themselves quite cosmopolitan because they had been to Italian, Greek, French, Chinese, Russian and Armenian restaurants, choosing in each the dish prepared for the curious—and eating it according to American table customs as they practised them.

This particular Tuesday they were dining at home.

Joe reached the apartment exactly at six-thirty, the trip home taking nearly an hour. Joe had been watching

the clock for the last twenty minutes of his business day so as to escape at the first possible opportunity.

Mattie, in the kitchen, heard his key in the lock and hurried to greet him. They kissed quite as fondly as they had in the morning, Floppit gave a little yip of welcome and received a pat on the head in reply.

Dinner was nearly ready, Mattie informed Joe, table set and all.

Joe hurried with his ablutions and reached the dining-room, accompanied by his newspaper, the *Journal* this time, at a quarter of seven. He divided the paper so that Mattie might have the last page, where are shown the strips of comics—he had read them hanging to a strap in the subway. Then he helped Mattie to bring in the hot dishes from the kitchen.

There was a small platter of five chops, fried quite brown, two for each one of them and one—to be cut into bits later—for Ikkle Floppit. Mattie always fried chops or steaks the days she went down-town, and sometimes other days besides.

There were potatoes, in their jackets to save her the trouble of peeling them, a dish of canned corn. There was a neat square of butter, too, and some thinly sliced bread on a silver-plated bread plate—a last year's Christmas present from one of Mattie's aunts—and a small dish of highly-spiced pickles.

Besides this, on the new tea wagon stood two pieces of bakery pastry, of a peculiarly yellow colour that had aimed at but far surpassed the result of eggs in the batter.

They sat down. Joe served the chops, Mattie the potatoes and corn. Mattie had put on her bungalow

apron as soon as she returned home—so as to save her suit from the spots and wear incidental to dinner-getting. Joe looked just as he had in the morning, plus a small amount of beard and minus his coat and vest.

Yet, as the morning's conversation had been spontaneous and enthusiastic and happy, this evening's meal had a curious cloud of restraint over it.

"Good dinner," said Joe, after his first mouthful.

"Yes, it does taste good," agreed Mattie.

"Go down-town?"

"Uh-huh, I went down about eleven. Just got home an hour ago. I looked at the waists, but didn't get any—they seemed awfully high. I may go down and get one to-morrow or Thursday. Any news in the paper?"

"Not much doing," Joe rustled his own sheets.

He never really read at dinner but he liked to have the paper near him.

"Look at Floppit, Joe. Isn't he cute, standing up that way? I've just got to give him a bite. It won't make him too fat, not what I give him. Come here, Missus' lamb."

Silence, then, save for the sound of knife against plate, a curious silence, a silence of avoidance. Then meaningless sentences, bits about anything, a struggle to appear happy, indifferent.

Joe, then,

"See any one down-town you know? Where'd you have lunch? Thought maybe you'd call up and have lunch with me."

"I did think of it, but I didn't come down your way. I stopped at Loft's and had chocolate cake and a cherry

sundae. No—I didn't see any one I knew—exactly. . . . Anything happen at the office?"

"Well, nothing much. We got that Detroit order."

"Did you, Joe? I'm sure glad of that."

A silence. Then, Joe, suddenly, enthusiastically, as if some barrier had broken, as if he could no longer stay repressed, upon the path he had set for himself.

"Say, Mattie, guess what happened this afternoon! You know Ferguson, the fellow who used to be in our office, whose brother is in the show business? Well, he came in and gave me a couple of seats to see 'Squaring the Triangle' for Friday night. They say it's a good show and in for a long run, but they want to keep the house filled while the show is new, till it gets a start."

"Did he, honestly? Say, that's great, isn't it? Where are they, downstairs?"

"Sure. You don't think he'd give away balcony seats, or at least offer them to me, do you? Remember, he gave us some last Spring. That makes three times this year we've been to shows on passes. Pretty good, eh, Mattie?"

"Well, I guess yes. We're some people, knowing relatives of managers. I tell you, I think—"

A pause, then.

Mattie's face lost its sudden smile and resumed its sadness of the earlier part of the meal.

"What's the matter?" asked Joe.

"Nothing the matter with me."

"Something else happened, too," Joe went on, enthusiastically, "at noon, I'd just left Childs'—and guess who I passed on the street?"

"Some one we know?"

"We don't know him exactly."

"Oh, I can't guess. Tell me."

"I know you can't—well, it was—William Gibbs McAdoo! Honest to goodness—McAdoo. It sure seemed funny. There he was, walking down the street, just like I've seen him in the movies half a dozen times. It sure gives you a thrill, seeing people like that."

Why the mention of William G. McAdoo should bring tears to the eyes of a woman who had never met him may be inexplicable to some. But tears came into the eyes of Mattie Harper. She wiped her eyes on the corner of her bungalow apron, sniffed a little, came over to Joe, put her arms around him.

"I just—just can't stand it," she sobbed. "I've been worrying and worrying. Your seeing McAdoo seems the strangest thing, after what happened to me."

"What was it, Mattie?"

Quite kindly and understandingly, Joe pushed his chair back from the table, gathered his wife on his knee.

"What was it, honey? Come tell Joe."

"It wasn't anything—anything to cry about. I—don't know what's the matter with me. It—it was in Lord & Taylor's, this afternoon. I was looking at gloves—and I looked up—and there, right beside me, not two feet away, stood Billie Burke. Honestly! I know it was her. She looked exactly like her pictures—and I saw her in 'The Runaway' years ago, and not long ago in the movies. Yes. sir, Billie Burke. Joe, she's simply beautiful."

"Well, well, think of seeing Billie Burke!"

"And Joe, when I saw her, the awfulest feeling came

over me. I tried not to tell you about it—after the letter this morning. I'd been thinking about Burton Center—but seeing Billie Burke just knocked it all out. Joe, you know I love you and want to do what you want—but, I—I just can't move to Burton Center—unless you've got your heart set on it. I'd go then, of course—any place. But I don't want to be—buried alive in that little town. Imagine those people—never seeing or doing anything—no new shows or famous people—nor any kind of life. And here I went down-town and saw Billie Burke and you—"

Joe's pats became even fonder. He smoothed her hair with his too-pale hand.

"There, there, don't cry. It's all right. Nobody's asking or expecting you to go to Burton Center. Funny thing, that. I had the same feeling. First, passing McAdoo—and then those theatre tickets. I guess there's something about New York that gets you. They've got to forget that stuff about Burton Center, I can tell you that."

Mattie jumped off Joe's lap, took the used dishes from the table, put on the pastry and sat down in her own place, across from Joe.

"This is good," said Joe, taking a bite; "where'd you get it?"

"At that little new French pastry shop we passed the night the black dog tried to bite Floppit."

"Oh, yes, looked nice and clean in there."

They ate their pastry slowly. Mattie dried her eyes. Joe spoke to her:

"Say, Mattie, don't worry for a minute more about that

Burton Center stuff. After eight years of living in the city, seeing famous people, living right in the center of things—didn't we see all the warships and airplanes nearly every day? They can't expect us to live in a rube place like Burton Center. We're used to more, that's all there is to it."

"I know," said Mattie, "I'd just die if I couldn't walk down Fifth Avenue and see what people wore. It's just weighed on me, terribly. I just saw us on the train going out there, and living in an awful little house without hot water or steam heat—and seeing Billie Burke just—"

The 'phone burred into the conversation.

Mattie answered it, as usual, assuming a nonchalant, society air.

"Yes, this is the Harpers' apartment. Yes, this is Mrs. Harper speaking. Who? Oh, Mrs. Taylor. How do you do. I haven't heard your voice in ages. We're fine, thank you. . . . No, I don't know much news. A friend of Mr. Harper's, a brother of Ferguson, the theatrical producer, invited us to see 'Squaring the Triangle' as his guests on Friday. They say it's a wonderful show. We saw 'The Tattle-tale' last Saturday. Yes, we liked it a great deal. . . . Saturday afternoon? Wait and I'll ask Mr. Harper if he has an engagement."

Hand over telephone mouthpiece, then:

"Want to go riding with the Taylors in their new car Saturday afternoon and stop at some road-house for supper?"

Resuming the polite conversational tone of the telephone:

"Yes, thank you, Mr. Harper and I will be delighted

to go. Awfully nice of you. At four? Fine. By the way, did I tell you I saw Billie Burke to-day? I did. She looked simply beautiful, not a day older than she looked last year. Wonderful hair, hasn't she? And Mr. Harper passed William G. McAdoo on the street. Yes, New York is a wonderful city. You did? Isn't that nice! All right, we'll be ready on Saturday—don't bother coming up, just honk for us, that's what all our friends do. Thanks so much, good-bye."

Mattie sat down at the table again.

"Well," she said, "it's time they asked us—they'll take us now and be through for a year. Still, we may have a nice time. But—what we were talking about—you sure you are in earnest about Burton Center?"

"You bet I am. The folks at home had the wrong dope, that's all. Why, I've got my position here, too important to give up at any one's beck and call. Didn't the boss congratulate me to-day on the way I wrote those Detroit letters? I bet I get a raise in another three months."

They folded their napkins into their silver-plated napkin-rings, rose from the table, walked together into the living-room, stood looking out into the drab bleakness of One Hundred and Thirty-second Street, across to the factory-like, monotonous row of apartment houses opposite, where innumerable lights twinkled from other little caves, where other little families lived, humdrum, unmarked, inconsequential, grey. And from the minds of Mattie and Joe faded the visions of little white houses and cool, green lanes.

They remembered, instead, the city, their city—Mattie

had seen a moving picture taken, once, from a Fifth Avenue bus—three years ago Joe had been introduced to —actually taken the hand of—William Jennings Bryan —they had both seen James Montgomery Flagg draw a picture for the Liberty Loan on the Public Library steps —a woman in a store had pointed out Lady Duff Gordon to Mattie—they had seen, on the street, a man who looked exactly like Charles M. Schwab—it might easily have been. . . .

"I'll write that letter right away and have it over with," said Joe, "I won't hurt ma's feelings—she and Dad mean all right. Living in Burton Center all their lives we can't expect them to understand things. It's ridiculous, of course. I don't know what came over us for a minute this morning. Of course we've got the crowded subways, here, and it costs a lot to live and—and all that. You can't expect a place to be perfect. But—New Yorkers like us couldn't stand that dead Burton Center stuff for five minutes. Why, we're, we're—city folks!"

# INDIAN SUMMER

## I

EVELYN BARRON dressed rather mechanically for the evening at the Durlands', quite as she always dressed to go to places. She chatted pleasantly with her husband as she arranged her hair. Martin Barron, as usual a little ahead of her, paused to smoke a cigarette before putting on his collar. Evelyn looked at him. She congratulated herself because he was good-looking, awfully nice, in fact. Nothing extraordinary, of course, but she had been married ten years and he was pleasant and she was used to him. He seemed nearly everything that a husband should be, and quite satisfactory when compared with most other husbands she knew.

Evelyn was thirty-five. Even as she looked at herself in the glass, and was pleased, she sighingly admitted that they were both—well—getting rather settled. She was not wrinkled or anything like that, of course, but she had gained ten pounds in the past year. She pulled viciously at a grey hair. She was glad that she was not really turning wholly grey, the way some women did.

Well, it wasn't as if she were getting on alone. Martin was aging, too. His rather sandy hair was receding from his forehead. His skin, always slightly pink, was a bit redder now after meals. He had taken to wearing low collars, and with his newest lowest ones his flesh

formed two rolls over the top. But Martin was awfully good. Evelyn knew that. He preferred a man as a private secretary and even at parties he never paid much attention to other women. A few years before Evelyn had rather hoped that he would look at other women. It would have added spice to things. Still, it was of no use to borrow trouble. Good old Martin! She liked him the way he was. He gave her everything he could afford.

Theirs had been practically a love match—that is, what usually passes for a love match. Martin had fallen in love with Evelyn, brown haired, brown eyed and jolly and vivacious, at twenty-four. Evelyn, with no other love affair in the immediate foreground, had recognized his sterling qualities and his good business position and had fastened her rather nebulous affection upon him. She hadn't made a mistake. She knew that. There hadn't been any one else she had cared for since. She had settled down into comfortable domesticity, one-half of a "little married couple" in an upper-middle-class New York set. It was not especially exciting. Sometimes she longed for thrills, but she had longed for them more years before than she did now. She was pretty well satisfied with things, now, most of the time. Especially with Martin. They had quarrelled a bit, of course. About trifles. But, usually, Martin was awfully good.

To-night, even. Here he was, going to the Durlands' without a word, and he hated that sort of thing. Yet he went because Evelyn liked to go. Of course he would spend most of his time smoking with the men. But he went, anyhow. Evelyn couldn't go alone. In her set, though they were awfully modern about a lot of things—

all of the women smoked and you could go to teas with men if you liked—it wasn't quite the thing to go to formal parties without your husband. In any case, Evelyn couldn't have gone without *some* escort, and no other man had ever asked her to go any place with him.

She wondered, just for a minute, why she wanted to go to the Durlands. Whenever she and Martin were invited she always made quite a point of pretending to like it. She wondered if she really did. She always felt a bit out of things. But it was different from the affairs she usually went to. Maud Durland was a writer, the only writer Evelyn knew well. She was one of those serious writers of little things who occasionally get into some of the newer literary reviews with half a column, or write a two-inch filler for a second-rate all-fiction magazine. These, when Maud Durland wrote them, seemed to have a special significance. She talked them over with her friends and her friends spoke of them when she was not with them.

She wrote exclusively about people she knew. You could pick out whom she meant if you knew her crowd. She made no money by her writing, of course, but she felt that she was in the midst of a career. Fred Durland had some sort of a remunerative, though inartistic, position connected with the coal industry, and Maud Durland spoke of it slightingly and with a patronizing sneer, though she never encouraged Fred to neglect coal for a more artistic employment.

One or two Sundays a month Maud Durland entertained with teas in her studio. Why the Durlands had chosen a duplex studio, instead of an ordinary apartment,

except that it was a better setting for tea parties, no one ever knew. But all of Maud's artistic friends liked it. At these Sunday affairs, Maud gathered together as many kindred souls as she could find. Usually they were mostly married couples, one-half of each couple being a mild devotee of some one of the arts. Sometimes, though, couples like the Barrons were asked to fill in and appreciate. There were always a few single people, too, yearning young women in wrong colours, effeminate young men trying to remember their poses, young business men attempting, once a week, anyhow, to dip into a higher culture than their routine office work afforded them.

The Durland apartment was removed from the stigma of mere pretence by being uptown, a couple of blocks from the park. Sometimes Maud managed to get real celebrities, a man or a woman who had had things in the big magazines or who had written—and sold—a book, or verse writers who filled out the pages when fiction stories ran too short and who turned an honest penny by working part time for the advertising agencies.

Evelyn had been to a number of these parties. She liked the atmosphere, the being with people who counted. Always, on the way home or the next day, she reflected on Martin's stolidity and wished he "did things" instead of being in the wholesale leather business. It always took several days to make her feel kindly toward him again.

Evelyn and Maud Durland had known each other about four years. While they were not chummy and found little to talk about when they were alone, they did

manage to have long telephone talks. Like most women, they found more to say over the telephone than when they were face to face. Occasionally they met at luncheon or tea. Evelyn was always awfully pleased to be included in Maud Durland's parties.

Now, her hair arranged and her face made up—Evelyn used rouge and powder, but not with any degree of cleverness—she slipped into her dress. It was rather a simple frock of dark blue Georgette crêpe, a ready-made, with conventional "smart" lines, the sort of dress hundreds of women between twenty-five and fifty were wearing. It was not an inexpensive dress, but it lacked personality and effectiveness.

Evelyn pulled Martin's coat a bit, straightened his tie, kissed him carelessly on the cheek. She felt she was really very fond of him.

"All ready, old dear," she said cheerfully. "And please don't make Jeffry crawl along so. It's late now. Other people drive faster than a mile every two hours without being arrested or having accidents."

When they arrived at the Durlands', the guests had assembled—were, in fact, already eating and drinking. Guests usually started on the refreshments immediately on arriving or as soon afterward as things were ready. Evelyn removed her coat in Maud Durland's room, an exotic room, like all of Maud's things. It was done in peacock blue and lavender enamel and was heavy with odd perfume.

Martin was waiting at the studio door, and they went into the studio together, nodding to people they knew. In fifteen minutes Martin was with a group of business

husbands of artistic wives who were smoking in one corner. Soon Evelyn was listening to the usual conversation. This night there was so much talk of the punch, which was pronounced extraordinarily good, that Evelyn drank several glasses of it. She joined a group who were discussing the newer lighting for the theatre.

"You see, with this new lighting the foots are merely incidental. Get a few thousand watts and a few baby spots for a real moonlight effect—"

Then,

"Here's the man who knows about things like that—all about the theatre—writes for the stage—wrote the lyrics for 'Here Sat Miss Muffet' and 'Why Didn't You Phone Me?' Hey, Northrup—"

A man turned, smiled, came toward them. Evelyn gasped. He was the sort of man she liked—the sort she had fallen in love with, vaguely, whenever she fell in love, years ago, before she met Martin. She had almost forgotten that there were men of that type. It made her feel different, alert, to realize that men still looked that way. Of course, he wouldn't notice her—men didn't notice her any more—hadn't ever noticed her a great deal.

His name was Franklin Northrup, she learned. She felt, in some way, as if she knew quite a lot about him. She was a bit confused as to whether lyrics meant the words or the music to songs, but she knew it was one of them. But that didn't matter. Franklin Northrup! He was the sort that had liked her, when she was younger. Younger? Well, she wasn't old—Northrup wasn't so young himself—her age or older. Why, she had been asleep, had forgotten what men were! It had been

years since she had really looked at a man—really noticed—

He was good-looking. He was the type she admired, always. Blonde. Martin was blonde, of course, but Martin was blonde in a heavy, red, sandy sort of way. Northrup was slender, almost thin. His hair was shining and smooth. She wanted rather to put her hand on it, to see if it felt as smooth and soft as it looked. What a foolish notion to have when you are married and thirty-five! His skin was pale, too pale, really, and he had lines around his mouth and rather deep shadows under his eyes. Those eyes were dark and sleepy-looking, not bright blue and stupid, like Martin's. She knew that type, cynical and yet sentimental and intense. How silly to think of such things! She liked his mouth, the upper lip rather thin, the under lip quite full. His nose was a bit aquiline. She liked him awfully well.

She wished, then, that she had not worn dark blue. You can't bring yourself out—show who you are—in dark blue. Evelyn felt suddenly that it hid her personality. A decent dark blue dress is a sort of a cloak of invisibility. Unconsciously she ran her hand through her brown hair, loosened it a trifle, pulled it a little farther over her face. She was glad she had shampooed it that morning. She was glad, too, that her eyes were brown and didn't need any make-up. She bit her lips, moistened them, leaned forward.

The others, chatting on about stage lighting, became suddenly unimportant. Every one else became unimportant. Northrup lounged on the arm of a chair.

"This new lighting is all right, in a way," he said;

"that is, they're making an effort. But, except in night scenes and things like that, I believe in enough light. These new birds really haven't anything on Belasco, though they kid his realism. Half of these new artists don't know what they're trying to do. Take that show they put on last year—"

His voice, quite deep, drawled pleasantly. Evelyn shivered with enjoyment. He was nice. She would force him to notice her. What should she do? He knew so much about things. She leaned a trifle closer to him.

Another man came up. Evelyn barely glanced at him. He talked. Evelyn lost interest. She caught Northrup's eye.

"Warm, isn't it?" he asked. He rose, came up to her chair. "An awful crowd here, too."

"You mean?"

"Oh, these groups amuse me. They talk so much of things they don't know anything about. The theatre, for instance. You interested in stage lighting?"

"I'm one of those who don't know anything about it," Evelyn laughed.

"I know a little and it bores me a lot," said Northrup. "What about a sandwich and some punch? The old girl put a big stick in it—quite like the old days, eh? Maybe she knows that is the only way she can get a crowd."

Evelyn rose. They walked off together. Evelyn felt Northrup's hand on her elbow. She moved a trifle closer to him. His fingers tightened around her arm.

They drank several glasses of punch, nibbled at sandwiches. Evelyn was not used to drinking.

"Wouldn't you like to get out of this mob?" Northrup

asked. "This chatter and near-music—I don't know why I came to this place. I live on the floor below—in one of the little un-studio apartments. Maud Durland's been worrying me for weeks to come to one of her tea fights I didn't know they could be as mad as this. I usually don't go in for this sort of thing."

Then,

"Let's go down to my rooms and get a real drink. What say?"

"Wouldn't it seem a bit—unusual?"

"Unusual, nothing. There's been so many women in those rooms that the hallboy thinks it's a girls boarding school. Honest, though, it's better than this racket. And a real drink. We'll just stay a minute. Oh, come on—"

"I'd love to," said Evelyn.

II

They left the studio without any one noticing them. In the hall Northrup took Evelyn's hand and they ran down the one flight of stairs. Evelyn felt young and buoyant and carefree.

On the floor below Northrup inserted a key in the door, opened it, turned on a light.

It was the usual bachelor apartment, but Evelyn had seen few bachelor apartments. Once, when a friend of Martin's had been ill, she and Martin had visited him. Once, with an aunt, she had visited the aunt's brother-in-law's quarters. This, now, seemed wicked and pleasant and mysterious.

There was a little hall, a living-room, and beyond it the

dim outlines of bedroom things. And she and Northrup were here, all alone! How much alone they seemed! There was a divan near the fireplace, Turkish rugs in rather bright colours, tables and smoking things on them, lamps with red-orange shades. These were lit now. The place was not especially artistic. The furniture was modern mahogany of rather uncertain Colonial design. But Evelyn thought it delightful.

"This is more like things, isn't it?" asked Northrup. "The air up there, cheap perfumes and vile cigarettes—how do they stand it? You go to that sort of thing much?"

"No, I've just been there a few times. Maud Durland is an old friend of mine and she insisted that I come. It's rather fun, though, watching people."

"Fun enough. I like this."

"This—oh, yes."

Northrup went into the little kitchenette. He made a great clatter with shakers and glasses and returned in a minute or so with two rather warm cocktails. Evelyn had to make a face over hers. Then they each had another. Evelyn declined a third, but Northrup finished them.

"It's a good thing," he said, "that drinking never affects me. I've been pouring things down all evening. Some miserable high balls Ed Benchley had at dinner, then a lot of that awful punch upstairs and now these. If I couldn't stand a lot, now that prohibition is here, I don't know how I'd ever get along—"

Northrup sat near Evelyn on the couch. He touched her hand, caught her fingers and smiled.

"We're going to be friends, aren't we?" he asked.

Evelyn felt, suddenly, as if all of her youth had come back to her. She felt the way she had felt, years before —before she had met Martin. A funny little choking feeling, far down in her throat—she had nearly forgotten that—not in years—. She felt a sudden lightness, almost an ache of happiness. So—she could still care—could thrill—Northrup—how handsome he was!

Northrup got up lazily, punched at some logs already laid in the fireplace and touched a match to the paper under them. It flared up. The logs blazed a moment later. He turned out the orange lights.

"This is what I like," he said, "just you and I. Somehow, from the minute I saw you, you seemed different —the sort of woman who gets things—not like most women . . . as if I'd known you a long while."

"I—I felt like that, too," admitted Evelyn. "There was something about you that reminded me, some way, of some one I must have known ages ago. I—you're rather different from most men—you seem . . ."

"You've noticed that, then? It's only with a few women—just a few, that I dare to be myself. Most women are a stupid lot, crude. I shrivel up, mentally, when I am near them. But there is something about you —I can be myself with you. You have a sympathy . . ."

"I'm—I'm glad you feel that. I can't express myself with most people. But you . . ."

Northrup talked about her—Evelyn talked about him. They said sentimental, romantic things, the sort Evelyn had almost forgotten. A moment later Northrup's arms

were around her. She should have resisted, of course. She knew that. But, instead, she hid her head in his coat, a nice coat, pleasantly smelling of tobacco. Martin's clothes smelled of tobacco, too, but this was different, more masculine—something.

With one hand Northrup raised her head, looked at her. Then he kissed her. It was a pleasant kiss. She had forgotten—perhaps had never known—that any one could kiss like that. It left her a bit breathless. The choking thrill was in her throat again. How nice it was to be kissed—like that—and by a man without a moustache! Martin's kisses were so hurried and moustachy and bristly—you couldn't feel his lips, even—and unemotional.

They stood up, then. Northrup went to the piano.

"I shall make up a song for you," he said, "a song just as dear and lovely and sweet as you are, a song that will always remind me of you—"

His fingers struck indefinite chords. Then he played a plaintive, sentimentally pretty little air, improvising words in a husky, deep voice. Suddenly he stopped with a crash, turned around, caught Evelyn in his arms and kissed her again. She loved the roughness of his caress.

"You dear, you dear!" he said, over and over, very softly.

"I must go—I really must," Evelyn said. "I—I—don't know why I act this way. I don't do this sort of thing, you know—really. What do you think of me? Coming in here at all and now . . ."

"I think you're a dear, a darling . . . why, child, I love you . . . I do, really . . ."

"I must go . . ."

"Tell me you're fond of me. . . ."

"Of course. . . ."

He caught her, kissed her again. She went to the door. They were out in the hall . . . up in the studio again. The lights seemed brighter and more glaring, the voices shriller than ever. No one had missed them. They joined a group who were discussing plagiarism—how much it was possible to take—not steal, of course—from some other writer, without really doing anything wrong. Evelyn was surprised at herself when she voiced an opinion. The lights were dancing a bit. She felt as if she were breathing something much lighter than air. Northrup drawled replies. She caught his eye, dropped her own eyes, met his again. A delicious secret was between them. These other people—how stupid they were—they didn't know—couldn't guess what had happened—while they had been talking about nothing at all.

Couples began to leave. Evelyn went to the dressing-room, added powder to her face, pulled her hair out a little more at the sides than she usually wore it, put on her coat. In the hall, as Martin stopped to speak to some one, Northrup joined her.

"You're going to see me?" he asked.

"Of course."

"May I telephone you?"

"Yes."

"When?"

"Any time you like. Not—not in the evening, though."

"Oh, no."

He put a card into her hand.

"Here's my 'phone number. I'm here most of the time. I do my work here, you know. We'll have tea—some day this week. . . ."

"Lovely. . . ."

Other people separated them. He was gone. Evelyn slipped the card into the pocket of her coat.

III

On the way home Evelyn scarcely noticed Martin. She was very happy, thinking. They must have talked, though, for later she remembered that she had answered questions that he had asked her. The ride seemed rather bumpy. That's all she remembered definitely about it.

At home, she undressed slowly, in a sort of a daze, still with the lovely, breathless feeling in her throat. In bed she snuggled in the pillows, closed her eyes.

It didn't seem possible—and yet—this had happened to her . . . Northrup—Franklin Northrup—his hand . . . his lips on her lips—kisses—his arms about her, roughly tender.

She slept restlessly, waking up for long periods of pleasant thoughts. When she awoke in the morning Martin was already splashing in the bathroom.

"You don't mind if I don't get up for breakfast?" she called. "Marie will have things the way you want them. I've a headache."

"Sorry. Don't bother about me. Lie with your eyes closed—you'll feel better."

A few minutes later Evelyn heard Martin awkwardly pulling down the shades. She was more annoyed that he

was there at all than she was grateful for this thoughtfulness. He interfered with her thoughts about Northrup.

Martin finished dressing and stood beside her bed, put a hand on her shoulder.

"Feel better?"

"Yes, a little. I'll be all right." She didn't like the feel of his hand, shrugged it away, pulled the covers higher.

He stamped out of the room in an attempt at quiet. She heard him in the dining-room, a faint clatter of dishes. Finally he left the house. She sighed with relief when she heard the door close.

Northrup . . . now she could think comfortably of him again. He seemed vague now, but still dear. She knew she should have felt guilty. She knew Martin's theory about things like that. She had heard him express it so many times. If a woman has an affair with another man—and this was an affair in a way—not only is the woman cheating her husband, but the other man knows he is making a fool of the husband, too, and thinks of him accordingly. In theory it seemed quite all right. Evelyn didn't want any one to make a fool of Martin—he was her husband. But she remembered Northrup, his sleek light hair, his full underlip, his half-closed eyes—how dear he had been when he had kissed her. He did care, of course. He'd ring her up to-day—this morning. Of course he'd telephone, just to talk to her, to assure her she hadn't imagined things. . . .

She bathed slowly, taking as long as possible. She put some of her best bath powder in the water. Then she dried briskly and rubbed talcum powder into her skin.

She examined her body in the long mirror of her bathroom. She did have rather nice lines—for thirty-five. Her body was straight and white. Of course—that was silly—thinking things—she might kiss Northrup again, of course. But nothing further. It would be dangerous—more than that. She was quite comfortably settled. She had heard often enough that you can keep a man caring for you only as long as you don't yield too definitely to him. A few kisses . . . yes. She closed her eyes and imagined herself in Northrup's arms again.

She knew that he would not call, especially this morning, without making an appointment. But she put on her best negligée of rose-coloured chiffon and braided her hair in a long braid down her back. She felt it made her look younger arranged that way.

He would telephone about eleven. Of course he was the sort who rose late. Until ten she busied herself with little things, a bit of torn lace on another negligée, reading the newspapers and her mail. What uninteresting mail—impersonal things from a lot of women—and advertising! Why had she ever let herself get so settled?

That was it. Really, she was not old or settled at all. Thirty-five isn't old. Why, summer was barely over. This was a coming back to youth again—a sort of Indian summer. Of course. She would be as lovely as she had ever been. Lovelier! She had learned things about life, about men, that a young girl could never know. After all, ten years of marriage ought to have taught her something—how to get along with men, anyhow.

The telephone did not ring at eleven. But Northrup could ring up at any time—in the afternoon, even. He'd said something about tea. Maybe he'd ask her today. . . .

What could she wear, to tea?

She went to her clothes closet, opened it wide, examined her things. Suddenly a great truth about clothes seemed to come to her. She knew, vaguely, that she had known it before, that some young women knew it—some older ones, too—but that she had forgotten it entirely. The truth was that there are definitely two kinds of clothes—clothes that women wear for men and clothes that women wear for other women. She knew now, as she had known, years before, that some women dress just for men. She saw them every day. Yes, she had degenerated in clothes, if she had ever been different. For her clothes were picked out because they were "stylish," because they were the clothes other women liked.

She took down a black satin dress. Yes—that was it—for women. Seated on the edge of her bed, she snipped at the neck. It was too high, of course. Lower, a bit of dainty lace. That's what men like—plain things, but striking and dainty and cuddly. Of course, she had known that all the time. How could she have let herself go? Yet she had felt that she had been keeping up with things. She felt that she knew, instinctively, now, the kind of clothes she wanted.

She finished the black dress, altered another gown with a few stitches. She'd have a seamstress in the house. She knew what her clothes needed—shorter sleeves, lower neck and touches of lace at the throat, hats that were

little and trim and would show her hair at the sides, or big hats, floppy and mysterious. How could she have forgotten? Why hadn't she dressed that way always? She would show Martin that she really needed clothes, get him to buy her some.

Martin . . . what a stupid, impossible fellow he was! How could she have ever thought differently? How stupid to let her put things over him. Why, she could put anything over Martin.

Then it came to her that she didn't want to put things over Martin, that she didn't want to consider him or have to worry about him at all. Why, his being around, the necessary thoughts about him, were really too stupid, too dreadful. She didn't want him near her at all, in any way.

Martin—how could she have stood him, all these years? How could she have liked him—stupid and awkward and dull, with his bristly moustache and his unfeeling kisses? She couldn't stand any more. That was certain. If she went away . . .

She dreamed, then, over her sewing. After all—if she left Martin . . . could get a divorce . . . Martin would be good enough to let her get it . . . then she could marry Northrup. That was it—marry Northrup, be with him all the time . . . wait for him in the evening, as she waited for Martin now.

Martin . . . what good was Martin, anyhow? She remembered that Martin had increased his life insurance. It was all made out to her. If anything happened to Martin . . . an automobile accident . . . Martin made Jeffry drive very carefully, but didn't accidents happen

every day? Twenty-five thousand dollars—that was something. Even the interest on that, with what Martin had saved . . . not so much, but she wouldn't have to go to Northrup penniless, anyhow. She pictured Martin dying of half a dozen painless illnesses or accidents, saw herself his devoted nurse, saw herself in widow's weeds, very becoming ones . . . afterwards . . . a few weeks afterwards . . .

She ate luncheon, hardly noticing what was served to her. It was two o'clock. Northrup had not telephoned. Martin telephoned to tell her he had got seats for a play she had wanted to see—she was to meet him at the hotel where they were to dine at seven. Plays, restaurants . . . they seemed stupid now, empty, without Northrup—if he could be there—if she were with him.

What if he didn't know her telephone number? She had told him, of course, but it was a difficult number to remember. It was not in the telephone book. Maybe he didn't even remember her name. That was delicious—and he had kissed her!

She got his card from her dressing-table drawer, where she had put it the night before, fingered it, went to the telephone. She would call him, say just a word, ring off. He'd want to talk more with her, then. She felt that she must hear his voice, low, deep, tender. What lovely things he had said to her!

She gave the number to the operator. Her voice broke into a falsetto. The line was busy. She drew little idle squares on the fancy telephone book cover some woman had given her for Christmas. A minute later she rang again. She heard central ringing the number

this time. A minute's ring. A masculine voice. Then,

"Well?"

"Is this Mr. Northrup?" Evelyn asked in her softest tones.

"No. It's Northrup's apartment."

"May I speak to him, please?"

A pause, then,

"Who is this, please?"

"Mrs. Barron."

He was at home, then. She would hear his voice in just a minute. He had company—of course that was why he hadn't telephoned her.

"I'll see if Mr. Northrup is at home."

She waited. It wasn't a servant's voice. Northrup had said that he had a Japanese valet who took rather good care of him, but Evelyn felt sure it wasn't a Japanese who had answered the telephone. How could a visitor not know if Northrup was at home?

The same voice,

"I'm sorry, but Mr. Northrup isn't in. If you'll leave your number I'll have him call you when he returns."

Evelyn gave her number, hung up the receiver. What did it mean? Northrup not at home—and the other man had to find out—in a two-room apartment! The voice had sounded rather amused, but of course that was imagination. But, if he weren't at home, why hadn't he telephoned to her? If he were at home, why didn't he want to speak to her? Because another man was there? It hadn't been Northrup's voice, though. Of course that wasn't possible.

She wandered around the apartment. The day had

turned from grey to a misty rain. It was not nice enough to go out. Evelyn hated rain. Anyhow, until seven there really was no place to go. She telephoned the garage, so that her car would call for her at half-past six.

She played a little on the piano, but she did not play very well. Then she put a roll in it—it was one of the reproducing players that played not badly for its kind. She chose several sentimental rolls, and then, seated on the couch in quite the same position she had sat the night before on Northrup's couch, she thought of him. She tucked one hand under her cheek, the way his hand had been under her cheek. Didn't he care, really?

Her restlessness grew greater. She must talk to some one. She rang up two women friends. They were not at home. Then she thought of Maud Durland. Of course! Maud could tell her things about Northrup. She wouldn't say much—nor let Maud suspect. Maud was always having affairs with other men, but she was the first to talk if any one else had a little affair. Maud was at home.

"You had the most wonderful party last night," Evelyn started in gaily enough. "You do have lovely parties."

"Yes." Maud's tone was pleasantly self-congratulatory, "every one seemed to have a nice time. Some punch, eh? Rogers and Maxwell and Hamilton each brought bottles and I said, 'Oh, be a sport and dump 'em all in the punch,' and they did, and see what happened. Nothing exploded, at that, but it did add quite a lot of pep to the party."

"It certainly did. I didn't neglect the punch, you bet.

By the way, tell me about a man I met—rather interesting—Northrup his name was—"

"Franklin Northrup. He lives in my building. Does lyrics. A dear, isn't he?"

"Rather nice."

"Northrup had a beautiful bun on, did you notice? Still, he's more fun with a bun on than not. Knows how to carry it. He's rather a dignified, retiring fellow when he's strictly sober, if at all. He—he didn't by any chance make love to you, did he, Evelyn?"

"Why—the idea—why of course not. . . ."

"Yes he did, Evelyn. Naughty, naughty! Don't tell fibs to mamma! But don't let that worry you. He's forgotten all about it to-day. Meet him to-morrow, sober, and he'll be a perfect gentleman. Meet him a bit stippled and he'll start in all over again. He's the lovin'est man any one ever saw. No harm, you know—you needn't feel 'ruint' over it or anything like that. He's just sort of soft and sentimental. And Evelyn, he'd make love to a post or one of the Hartman girls if he were in the mood. When he's sober he's in love with Marjorie Blake. He dedicates all of his music to her. And did you notice a tall, dark-haired fellow named Hillard—?"

IV

Maud talked on. When she had finished, Evelyn hung up the receiver rather limply and sank back into her chair. So—Northrup was just a sort of a . . . a town lover! He acted that way to every one! And, when he was sober, he was in love with Marjorie Blake! And Marjorie Blake was a dancer about twenty, slender and

blonde and dimpled, a typical ingenue with blonde curls and a naughty smile, all pink and white and young . . . and here she, Evelyn, was thirty-five and she had thought —hoped—that Northrup . . .

Suddenly, she hated Northrup and his love-making. How dared he kiss her—because he had been drinking? If she ever saw him again she wouldn't speak to him at all. And he hadn't even had the decency to apologize—or to talk to her when she had called him on the telephone! What a fool he must think her. She hated herself—she had been drinking a little, too. She hated him worst of all.

It was time to dress for dinner. Evelyn dressed hurriedly, putting on the gown she had altered that morning. How cheap it looked—like a shop-girl's with the neck cut so low! It was too late to alter it and they were dining too informally for evening clothes. How silly she had been this morning about dresses! Why, she dressed very well for her position, nice things and conservative. What idiocy to think that men like one sort of thing and women another. Northrup—she shuddered.

The telephone rang. Evelyn ran to answer it herself. It was to announce that her car was waiting. She put on her hat, tucking her hair in neatly at the sides. Why —she was middle-aged . . . getting middle-aged! Indian summer indeed! She didn't even know any men except awful friends of Martin's and the husbands of her friends. There wasn't any one who gave her any attention at all. And now—one man, after drinking terrible punch and worse cocktails, had put his arms around her

—kissed her—and it had kept her from sleeping, worried her all day. Even now there were dark circles under her eyes.

Martin . . . oh, he was all right. She liked him, of course. Their life would go on, together, just the same. But now Evelyn knew that in some way this dipping into youth or an attempted youth had robbed her of something rather important—of really liking Martin—of appreciating him. She had looked up to him. But from now on Martin would be just a husband—unimportant—getting bald and fat. But then, she was just a wife, getting grey and fat, too, without an adventure. Indian summer? Evelyn doubted whether there really was such a season.

# A LOVE AFFAIR

## I

WHEN her mother knocked on her door, at half-past seven, as she always did, Laura Morgan called a drowsy "All right, Ma, I'll get up in a minute." Then she lay in bed for twenty minutes, in a pleasant, half-asleep state and thought of Howard Bates. He seemed very close to her when she was not quite awake, as if she were still with him in the dream she had had. The remembrance of the dream, comforting and warm, still surrounded her, though she couldn't remember the details. Not that it mattered. Laura didn't "believe in dreams," though she had once had a paper-covered dream-book, in which she could look up things like daggers and handkerchiefs and learn their significance. Half-asleep was better than dreaming. She could change the dreams to suit herself, could picture Howard more plainly, his soft tumbled hair, his sleepy hazel eyes. She and Howard walking together, dancing together, kissing, even.

There was no reason for getting up promptly, anyhow. Her mother and Maud could get breakfast for her father and Philip, her brother, just as well as if she were down. Lying in bed like this was the pleasantest part of her day.

It didn't seem possible to Laura, now, that less than a year ago she and Howard had actually gone together.

He had come to see her and they had sat in the always-rather-stuffy living room and had sung popular pieces, their heads close together at the piano, or they had gone out. Howard had taken her to Perron's Drug Store for sodas and sometimes to the semi-monthly dances at Stattler's Hall or to Electric Park. He had brought her pound boxes of candy, pink and white bonbons intermingled with assorted chocolates in a blue box tied with pink ribbon. They had been to nearly every episode in "Her Twenty Dangers" which had run, two reels at a time, at the Palace Moving Picture Theatre. Howard had made love to her, had held her close as he told her good-night, had kissed her. And now Howard was going with Mary Price.

Laura never knew just how it had started—Howard going with Mary. She and Howard had some sort of an argument about nothing at all. Then Howard hadn't asked her to go to a dance at Stattler's Hall. Not wanting to stay at home, she had gone with a travelling salesman from St. Louis, a fat fellow she didn't like.

She had watched for Howard all evening. He had come in, alone, about ten, and had danced only once with her, spending most of his time smoking cigarettes on the fire-escape with some of the other boys or dancing with other girls. Mary Price hadn't been there at all. Mary Price wasn't even popular with the boys—hadn't been until Howard started going with her.

Somehow, then, Howard had lost interest in Laura. All of her little tricks hadn't helped. Mary's little tricks had. He started going with Mary, instead. Laura knew Mary but not awfully well. Mary had only been living

in Morristown for a couple of years. She was a silly, giggly, clinging little thing.

Laura hated Mary. She knew Mary hated her, too. Hated and felt superior because she was "cutting her out." They pretended a great friendliness, with the overcordiality of girls who are a little afraid or jealous. But, lately, there had been a peculiarly unpleasant smile on Mary's round face, a mixture of triumph and indifference, when they met. For, now, Howard took Mary to all of the places he had taken Laura a year before. It was just as natural in the set of which Laura was a part to say "Mary and Howard" as it had been to say "Laura and Howard" last year.

Of course Laura pretended not to care for Howard nor to care whom he went with. She felt she succeeded for no one ever teased her about him. Laura went with other men now, travelling salesmen, Morristown boys, too. She went with Joe Austin most of all because he spent money on her and took her places. But they all seemed alike, stupidly uninteresting, with little, annoying mannerisms. Even the nicest of them was nice only because of faint echoings of Howard's manner. Mostly, they were just a little better than no one at all. They showed that she could get men to be nice to her.

Not that Howard was at all remarkable. Laura knew he wasn't, knew that other girls in Morristown, outside of Mary Price, didn't seem to think much of him. But to Laura he seemed very precious. He had rather a deep, slow voice, a way of drawling the last words in sentences, a way of caressing words, even, of putting meanings into them that weren't there at all. Little things he had said

were always coming back to Laura with a new poignancy, now that she didn't go with him any more.

Why had she let him go? How had she lost him? She hadn't appreciated him. It seemed impossible now —he was so very dear—and yet, a year ago he had been nice to her, telephoned her, come to see her, liked her a lot, really, didn't go with other girls at all.

There was no one else for her. The travelling men and the Morristown boys were distressingly alike. Joe Austin was her favourite only because other girls thought he was a good catch. Laura knew that she would probably never get away from Morristown. She had no special ambition or ability. The family had just enough money to get along, without the girls doing anything useful. No one would ever come to Morristown who counted. She was twenty-four and not awfully young looking, a thinnish girl with light hair who was already getting lines around her mouth and chin.

There were several boys who liked Laura, Fred Ellison and Morgan French and Joe. Joe was in love with her, actually. It always surprised Laura when she thought of it. For she never did anything to appeal to Joe. Of course when he took her places, dances or movies, she was nice to him, a sort of reward for his company. Lately, too, she even went through the pretence of coquetting with him if Mary or Howard were present, just to show them that she was having a good time. She had invented a sort of mask of gaiety for them, a rather tremulous, shrill gaiety. She wanted them to see that she was always having a good time, that she was popular, the centre of things. It was hard, keeping up, when Howard

wasn't there. Why did she like Howard? It seemed so silly. Howard! His mouth was rather soft and full and he had a way of raising one eyebrow with a doubting half-smile . . . his hands were the sort you want to reach out and touch, if they were near. Howard . . .

Her mother called to her, annoyed, from downstairs,

"Breakfast is all ready, now, Laura. You're a great help to me."

"Coming right away, Ma."

Laura yawned and stretched and got up, putting her bare feet into the pink hand-crocheted bedroom slippers that Julia Austin, Joe's sister, had given her at Christmas, shapeless things, never very pretty, like Julia and all the Austins. In the bathroom she bathed her face and arms and put on a blue cotton crêpe kimono, embroidered in white butterflies, over her pink cotton gown. She inserted a couple of hairpins in her hair and went down stairs to breakfast and her family.

Her mother and Maud, who was two years younger, but more pleasantly plump, were clad in starchy blue morning dresses, with checked aprons over them. They looked agreeably capable as they placed the stewed fruit and oatmeal on the table. Her father and her brother, Philip, were already seated at the breakfast table.

Laura sat down, smiled a mechanical "good morning" and took her napkin from the plated-silver napkin ring with her initials on it. The Morgans had clean napkins twice a week.

"Isn't she the merry little sunshine!" Philip ventured.

"Let me alone," said Laura, and her voice trembled.

"If you'd been awake half the night with a headache you'd be grumpy, too."

Philip subsided.

Her father looked at her over his glasses.

"Been having a lot of headaches lately, it seems to me," he said. "Running around too much to dances. If you get to bed some night before twelve, you might wake up in a better humour."

Laura didn't answer. She wanted to scream out, to tell them that her head didn't ache at all but that they annoyed her and bored her terribly, that she didn't want to talk to them, that all she wanted was Howard Bates, wanted him there, with her now, always.

She finished her breakfast. The two men left. Maud and her mother, in a pleasant buzz of conversation, cleared off the table, began pottering around the dining-room, putting it in order.

"I'll dust the living-room," Laura volunteered. She had to do something, she knew. She could be alone, there.

It couldn't be true—and yet last night at a dance at Miller's Hall there were rumours that Mary and Howard were engaged.

Engaged! If Mary once got him—If the engagement were announced—she had lost him, then. She had lost him anyhow. Of course. Lost him. It didn't seem possible. Howard!

In the living-room she threw herself down on the couch, buried her head in a cushion. There, on that couch, Howard had first kissed her. She stretched out her hand along the back of it. How many times she

had found his hand there. And Howard was going to marry Mary Price. She wanted to scream out, to stop things, some way. She didn't know what to do.

She got up and dusted the living-room. On the upright piano was a pile of popular songs with garish covers, torn. Some of those songs Howard had sung to her—had brought to her. Howard didn't have a very good voice, just deep and pleasant. She had liked hearing him sing because it was him singing. His hair, soft and always mussed looking . . . his hand . . . And now he was going to marry Mary. She had tried hard enough . . . everything she knew.

She didn't believe much in prayers—nor in God—since she was grown up. She had often shocked her family and her friends by declaring her unbelief in any God at all. Yet, now, suddenly, she threw herself on her knees, in front of the couch, and buried her head in the seat cushion.

"Oh, God," she groaned, "send Howard back to me. Make him love me! I—I haven't asked for much. I haven't got much. He is all I want. I don't care . . . I want him—please, God."

She got to her feet feeling a little better. Maybe it was just a rumour, after all. How would Nettie Sayer know? It was Nettie who had told her. Why, even now, Howard might be thinking of her, deciding that he loved her and not Mary, after all. How could he love Mary, after all the good times they had had together, little things, jokes, his kisses?

Laura finished dusting the living-room with a little flourish, even. Why, anything might happen.

Her mother and Maud were in the kitchen. She joined them there, listening for half an hour to their conversation, joining in, finally. Wasn't Maud silly? If only there were some one she could talk to about things. But Maud—her mother—they didn't know, couldn't feel things the way she did. Howard!

He might be going to ring her up. Why, yes, maybe he would telephone her. For an instant she forgot that she had thought that same thing for a long time, months, now. This was different. She had heard of the engagement. She had prayed. Things couldn't go on. Howard worked in his father's store. It was a musty store that dealt mostly in leather and saddles but included some hardware. Laura didn't like it. It was a hard store to find excuses for going into. But he could telephone her from there, any time. Why, she used to telephone him there, lots of times. He got down town about nine. It was ten, now. He'd been there an hour, more than likely.

"I think I'll go up and dress," she said. "I promised Myrtle Turner I'd attend to those programs for the Ladies' Aid Benefit and get a proof for the meeting tomorrow."

Her mother and Maud nodded mechanically. What difference did anything make to them?

II

Laura bathed and dressed rather rapidly, in a sort of a fever, listening all the while for the telephone to ring. It did not ring. After she had dressed and put on her neat blue coat and tan velvet hat, she made a pretence of talk-

ing with Maud. If Howard did telephone, she didn't want to miss him. Then she had a feeling, suddenly, of wanting to be out of the house.

She hurried down town, the business street that stretched out from the Brick Church to the railroad depot. Just off this street she stopped into a grimy little print shop and received smudged copies of the Ladies' Aid Benefit program. That was all her errand consisted of. She had nothing else to do down town.

She must see Howard, of course. She invented half a dozen errands that took her past Bates' Harness and Leather Store, with its hideous imitation horse of dappled grey in one window. She did not see Howard, though she peered in, eagerly, as she passed. She must see him! Once she fancied she did see him. What a dark store it was.

She had bought everything she could think of, down town. She had talked to half a dozen people, making the conversation last as long as possible, giggling whenever she could giggle. She had accepted an invitation to go to the movies later in the week with Mark Henry, had promised to dance with Archie Miller at the next dance, at Stattler's Hall. She couldn't go home without seeing Howard.

She walked past the store again. Her steps dragged. She looked inside. She did not see him. She must go in—find a pretext for going in. What could she get? She had thought of everything so many times. She must go in.

Her hand was on the door. She was inside the store. Ray Davenport, the clerk, a sprightly young fellow,

came up to her. Had she wasted this chance, coming in —and not seeing Howard?

She knew Ray and smiled at him. She couldn't ask for Howard, now.

"Have you any—any of those new ice-scrapers?" she asked. "Not the kind you chop ice with but the kind that scrapes it, you know, with lots of teeth, into a sort of little cup."

"I don't think so," Ray hesitated. "You don't mean this kind?"

He walked back of the counter, took something from a dusty bin and held it out to her.

"Oh, no, we've got one like that—"

In the back of the store was an office, with partitions just high enough so you could see who was there. Inside, now, was Howard!

She hesitated. Then,

"Hello, Howard," Laura called, prettily.

Howard Bates looked up, came out of the office toward her. As he came she grew almost dizzy, held tightly to her black leather purse. How lovely he looked—he was dearer than she had thought him. He looked tired, a trifle thin, even, and pale. His hair was dishevelled. Howard—why—he had gone with her—had been hers—hers to love, once. . . .

She smiled nervously as he came up to her, and held out her hand. She wanted to keep his hand in her own, to run her hand over his face, to put her fingers through his hair, on his lips, as she once had done. She felt that she could have stopped loving him, quite without trouble,

if his mouth had been different. Or his hair—or his eyes.

"I'm hunting for an ice-shaver," she told him. "I've been making a sort of a new drink we're all awfully fond of—folks say it's good, but they are probably just being polite about it—and the ice has got to be shaved. The other night one of the boys nearly broke his finger with our ice pick—Jerome Farmer—it's taken it nearly a week to heal. So I thought if I could get another kind—"

Jerome Farmer was the banker's son—awfully popular. He had called, had hurt his finger on an ice pick. She'd let Howard see that she didn't sit at home and wait for him, anyhow.

He was sorry. He didn't have the ice-shaver she wanted. How was every little thing? Going to the dance, Wednesday? He'd see her, then. Before, maybe. . . .

What could she say? She had said everything she knew how to say, weeks before.

She was out on the street. Howard hadn't said anything she hoped he would.

She walked home slowly. She was angry, now, at herself. Why had she gone in the store at all? Wouldn't he know that she was running after him? He hadn't mentioned Mary, either. Maybe they weren't engaged, after all. Hadn't she prayed to God?

At home, she took off her serge dress and got into her kimono again. Her mother and sister were not at home. Curled up in the biggest living-room chair she read all of the stories in her favourite magazine. She stopped in

between stories to think about Howard. Sometimes she read a whole page before she realized that she didn't know a word she had read. Why had she gone to see him? Still, she wouldn't have got to see him at all if she hadn't gone. What did he see in Mary? A little thing like that! Why couldn't she get him back again? She was as pretty as Mary, as clever, as nice in every way. Maybe—still—hadn't she prayed for him?

She read, listening for the telephone.

At five o'clock the telephone rang. A masculine voice asked for her. She trembled, though she knew it was not Howard. It was Joe Austin. She had an engagement with him for that evening. He telephoned to ask if she would prefer going to a vaudeville show to staying at home.

"Let's stay at home for a change," she said, and wondered why she said it. Usually, she wanted to be going places every minute. "I've been out late every night for a week. I've got to get some sleep. I'll be awfully glad to see you, though, Joe. Around eight."

Half an hour later her mother came home and then Maud. There were meat cakes for dinner and she did not like them. She had not had any lunch. She went without lunch frequently.

Dinner was the usual meal. The family laughed over the day's events. She laughed, too, even permitted Phillip to tease her when she said that Joe Austin was coming to call.

"Why doesn't he take the spare room?" Philip cried. "He's here enough. Though he isn't here much for dinner. You got to hand it to Joe. He takes you places.

He isn't one of these home comforts and mealers like Howard Bates used to be, coming in just before we sat down at the table."

"Is that so?" asked Laura.

Yet she was not angry. She was really happy when, under any circumstances, Howard's name was brought into the conversation.

After dinner she dressed again putting on a cheap pink frock that had done duty as a dance dress before it lost its freshness. She did her hair over, puffing it out around her ears. Her face was getting thin. She must stop worrying about things. Why, she really looked more than her age. Little fat things like Mary Price always looked younger than they really were—fooled men. She added an extra bit of rouge and powder. What did it matter? She wouldn't see Howard.

At eight, Joe Austin came. Maud was spending the evening with some girl friends. The rest of the family always stayed in the dining-room when the girls had company so, as usual, Laura had the living-room for her young man and herself. He came laden with a large box of candy, the chocolate creams already hardened by age. Laura greeted it with extravagant praise and made a pretence of feeding him the first piece.

What a tiresome fellow Joe was! She looked at him critically. Stupid. He had light hair that was rather uneven, the sort that can't be brushed quite smooth, but it lacked the softness of Howard's. Already it was starting to recede. Worse than that, there was a thin place on the back of his head. Yet Joe wasn't more than twenty-six or so, about Howard's age. He was much

richer than Howard. His father owned the Austin House, the second best hotel in town, the one frequented by commercial travellers and theatrical companies, people like that.

Joe was a sort of manager and clerk, and no doubt would take over the hotel when his father died. He was more citified than Howard. He went up to Chicago two or three times a year. He wore better fitting clothes, with little fancy touches to them in lapels and pockets. Howard wore awfully plain things, always in need of pressing, always smelling slightly of tobacco—lovely things—

Joe was rather dapper, even. "Good company," most people called him. He knew a lot of vaudeville jokes, and, in a crowd, could always say something to get applause. Howard wasn't much fun in a crowd. Howard!

Joe was telling a long anecdote, now. As Laura looked at him, she wondered why she allowed him to call, why he liked her, anyhow. His nose was a trifle too short, turned up just a little. His face was a little too thin. There were slight lines in his cheeks. Howard was thin too,—a different thinness. Joe was so stupid and talky and useless. Why, if he died that minute it wouldn't matter. He had no force, no personality. Yet he was more popular, more of a catch than Howard. She knew that. Perhaps that, really, was the reason she kept on going with him. What a bore he was! Should she keep on letting him call, talking to him?

The telephone rang. Almost rudely Laura rushed from the room to answer it. The telephone stood on a little

table in the hall. She had hoped . . . The voice was Rosalie Breen's.

"Have you heard the news?" she wanted to know. After the usual hesitation she went on, "I thought maybe you had. You are one of the people she was going to call up. Mary Price and Howard Bates. What do you think of that? She just 'phoned me. I guess she'll 'phone you right away, too. She's having us all in tomorrow night, a little party. I heard it last night at the dance. Did you? Howard was one of your old flames, once, wasn't he, Laura?"

"Oh, I didn't mind him hanging around before I—I—had some one else," Laura managed to say. She managed a giggle, too.

III

So, Howard was engaged. Well, that was settled. Gone! She might as well wipe him off her slate. She knew Howard. She could never get him back, now. She could never mean anything at all to him. Ever. Something went out. Life was greyer, would always be greyer. Things didn't seem to matter as much. Maybe things had never mattered, anyhow. Of course she'd get over it. People got over things like that in years. Years. To keep on living. . . . And she had prayed to God. God!

She told Joe. They talked about that, other things. Howard gone! Joe was talking. She giggled over his stories. She found she couldn't giggle any more. She lapsed into silence. What did Joe matter? What if she never saw him again? What did anything matter? Joe

—well, he was the nicest man she knew—now. A better catch than Howard. Mary knew that. Why of course. Mary would have been glad to have gone with Joe. Why, Mary had made up to Joe. He thought her a stupid little thing. She was, too. Joe! After all, why not? It was better than no one at all, than letting people ask her about Howard.

She went over and sat next to Joe on the couch. She rested her hand, carelessly, near his hand. She leaned toward him just a little. She was glad her dress was rather low. She looked rather nice, that way.

"I feel so nervous, Joe," she said, "I don't know why. A sort of a mood. Why, I believe I'm trembling. Feel my hand."

She held out one hand to him.

"Not an excuse for me to play hands with you, Laura?"

"You old silly. Don't you know me better than that?"

"Bet I do. What's the matter?"

"I don't know. I just felt sort of—sad. Don't you get that way, sometimes?"

"Not when a girl as nice as you lets me hold her hand. I say, Laura . . ."

"Now, Joe," giggled Laura, and pulled her hand away. Holding Joe's hand gave her as much emotion as holding Maud's hand—or the cat's paw.

"I don't know what's the matter with me," she said, and sighed.

"Now, now," said Joe, and gave her shoulder little pats. "Cheer up and tell papa what's wrong."

She laughed at that and put one hand over his hand as it lay on her shoulder.

"You're a dear little girl," Joe said, "if I only thought you really liked me, Laura . . ."

Half an hour later he had his arms around her, was telling her he loved her, had asked her to marry him.

Engaged to Joe! The years stretched out indefinitely, without colour. Why not? She couldn't be unengaged —unmarried—all her life. She couldn't let Mary laugh at her—or Howard. Now, Howard couldn't laugh. Why, Howard had been jealous of Joe Austin, one time. She'd show them—show Howard and Mary. She didn't need Howard. Howard's father was stingy. Mary wouldn't have nearly as much as she could have. She could have a new house—or stay at the hotel and have no work at all, if she liked . . . clothes, city things, trips . . . she'd have a big wedding, too, bigger than the Prices could afford.

The telephone rang again.

"Answer it, won't you, Joe?" she begged, prettily.

Joe answered it, came back in half a minute.

"It's for you—Mary Price to break the big news," he said.

"Want to go to her house, to-morrow night?"

"Sure thing."

"Shall I tell her—about us?"

"Go ahead, spring it. She's not the only one with news. Good stuff. Give 'em something else to think about."

She was at the telephone.

Mary was pleasantly polite.

"I'm having a few friends in to-morrow night . . . Howard and I—"

"Just heard it, dear," said Laura. "I'm awfully glad. And just for that—here's something for you—you're the first I've told. Joe and I have decided the same thing. Must be in the air. Thanks. Yes . . . isn't it? Won't it be fun . . . lots of parties and things together. I'm so excited. Aren't you? You've got my very, very best wishes. Congratulate Howard for me, won't you? I certainly know how lucky you are, too. Howard is a fine fellow—one of the nicest boys I know. You know, I used to go with Howard a little . . . before—I—I knew Joe. Yes—isn't he fine? Thanks . . . we'll both be delighted. See you to-morrow evening. . . ."

Howard! With a smile on her lips, Laura went back into the living-room to her fiancé.

# BIRTHDAY

## I

IT was the old lady's birthday. She was eighty-two years old and well preserved. To be sure, she was a trifle deaf, but not so deaf as she usually made out. She could hear conversations not intended for her, though she had an annoying way of saying "heh?" when she didn't want to hear a thing. Then, after it had been repeated two or three times she would pass it off as of no consequence, and few things warrant triple repetition.

The old lady was proud of her age. After all, the fact that she had lived so many years was the most remarkable thing about her, as it usually is the most remarkable thing about people who live long. She had outlived her friends, her generation, her welcome.

She was still useful and quite paid her way. She lived with her son, Herman Potter, a thin man of over fifty, who had leather skin and a bald head, and his wife, Minnie, a too-fat woman of the same age, given to useless talk, exclamations and mild hysteria.

There were five children in the family of Herman Potter and one grandchild. They all lived at home except Roger, who was married and in business in Harrington. Fred, the oldest, nearly thirty, had been married but his wife had run away two years before with a soap drummer. Lucius and Phillip, the other sons, had never

married. Fanny, the one daughter, had had marital misfortunes, also. She had married, at twenty-four, and a couple of years later her husband had "gone out West to try his luck," and she had never heard from him again. Now she had a divorce, granted on grounds of desertion, and was ogling every unattached man in Graniteville. She had one child, a peevish, pale little boy of four, named Elbert.

The old lady had had three children. The older son, Morris, lived in Kansas City, but Morris' wife absolutely refused to consider her husband's mother as a part of her household. In fact, Morris' wife felt that she had married beneath herself by accepting Morris at all, and held herself aloof from Morris' family. The old lady's only daughter, Martha, was dead. Martha had been her favourite child. Martha's husband had married again. Her only child, Helen, was married and lived in Chicago.

The old lady's life was uneventful enough and not unhappy. She was the first one up in the morning because she "didn't need much sleep." She would dress quietly, so as not to wake any one. If, occasionally, she stumbled against a chair, some one would be sure to say, at breakfast, "Didje hear Gramma? She woke me up, knocking around before daylight." The old lady was not very steady and had to hold on to things sometimes when she walked.

There were always unwashed dishes from the night before. The old lady would wash these and then put on the oatmeal for breakfast. There was always oatmeal because it was cheap and filling, and the old lady was there to attend to it. She herself didn't like oatmeal,

though she listened each morning to Herman and Minnie who would say, "Gramma, you ought to eat some of this. Fine. Nourishing. Make you grow young."

The old lady would purse her thin lips and then answer, politely enough, "Thank you, but I'm not one that's much for oatmeal."

For breakfast the old lady would drink a cup of coffee without sugar, but with milk in it. She preferred cream but didn't dare say so for the cream pitcher was small and the men helped themselves to it first. After breakfast, if there was any coffee left in the coffee-pot, the old lady would drink another cup, standing up in the kitchen, trying to force a few drops out of the cream pitcher to put into it. If there was fruit for breakfast, the old lady was given the worse piece. She contented herself with one piece of toast, sparsely buttered, for she always felt Minnie's eyes on her when she helped herself to butter. The old lady didn't have a very large appetite.

After breakfast she would help her daughter-in-law with the dishes. Fanny affected delicacy. She was lazy and housework annoyed her. She spent the mornings in her own room reading magazines or running blue ribbon through her lingeries or making rather effeminate little suits for her son.

The old lady was always afraid of her daughter-in-law. Minnie was fat and slow-minded. She was constantly telling the old lady how glad she ought to be because they were all so "well fixed." She liked to spend a long time discussing trifles, how Mrs. Fink's dress hung and didn't Gramma think it was her last year's dress made over—

she had a blue dress last year, remember?—and did Gramma think the butcher gave good weight—they had just one meal from that pot-roast, and here there was hardly enough of it left to slice cold.

The Potters lived in a large, square house. Herman had bought it at a forced sale when the children were small. It was painted brown and there were big trees around it. It looked gloomy. It had been one of Graniteville's best streets but the business district had been creeping close until now a garage stood across the street and a store selling cigars and notions just two doors away. There were numerous small rooms in the house and this meant housework. Herman always smiled patronizingly when "the women folks" spoke of the difficulty of keeping the house in order. He was well-to-do in a moderate Graniteville way and was considering changing the Ford for a larger car but he didn't see why three women couldn't keep a house clean without outside help. They gave out the washing, didn't they?

Herman didn't consider that Fanny did none of the housework and that the old lady really was old, that it was almost a task to walk, sometimes, and that on damp days when her shoulders ached it was rather difficult to try to dust, even.

In the afternoon when the house was in order, the old lady would embroider. She did things for all of the family and for the friends of Fanny and Minnie and for church bazaars. She did guest towels, making them even more annoying by the addition of bright blue "blue-birds for happiness" or impossible butterflies; shoe bags with outlines of distorted footwear to explain their use; dresser

scarfs with scalloped outlines which didn't launder well.

The old lady did the best she could. She made things people liked and asked for. The only times she ever received praise were when she gave away her finished works of art. She never complained about her eyes, though they did hurt after she bent over her sewing for two or three hours at a time. She preferred to read, though the family took only the cheapest magazines full of sensational stories or articles about motion picture actresses. Sometimes the old lady would go to the Carnegie Library and bring home novels, favourites of thirty years ago, but the family laughed at her when she did that.

In the evening the members of the family would go their various ways without bothering much about her. Fanny would persuade one of the boys to take her to the movies or she would go with a girl friend, loitering on the way home in hopes of being overtaken by masculine admirers. The boys would go to the movies or to a vaudeville show or play pool. They belonged to a couple of lodges, the kind of lodges that are supposed to have international significance—you can give the distress sign to the ticket-seller and get a ticket to Europe in a hurry, though none of the Potters would probably ever want to go to Europe. They liked the idea. A boast of one of the lodges was that none of its members had ever been electrocuted and, though none of the boys looked forward to a life of crime, they accepted the fact eagerly and repeated it as something pretty big for the lodge. The lodge rooms were pleasant places to waste evenings. Minnie and Herman patronized the motion picture thea-

tres, too, but they cared more for cards than for the drama, even in its silent form. Nearly every evening they went to one of the neighbours for a game of bridge or poker or had a few guests in. At ten-thirty there were refreshments of rye bread and cheese and sardines, known as "a little Dutch lunch," and appreciated each night as if it were a novelty.

The old lady didn't go out much evenings. She walked slowly and stumbled a great deal, so no one liked to bother with her. At the movies she couldn't read the captions easily and that meant some one to read them aloud to her, and the family didn't consider that refined. She could not quite master the intricacies of bridge even enough to fill in when another player was needed, though she tried pitifully hard and her hand shook if she held the cards. The old lady would sew or read. There were socks and stockings to be darned and clothes to be mended, besides the embroidering, so she had enough to do.

About nine she would nod over her sewing, pull herself together, ashamed, and look around to see if any one had observed her, when there was any one at home to observe, which was seldom enough. She would start sewing again, drop off into a doze, start up, finally take her sewing and retire to her bedroom.

The old lady had a fine room. Any of the family would have told her that. It was above the kitchen and got the winter winds rather badly, so that the old lady frequently had sniffy colds, but it was a fine room, nevertheless, with two windows in it. The one bathroom was

quite at the other end of the hall, but, after all, one can't have everything.

Two of the boys roomed in the attic, so the old lady could feel that she was having quite the cream of things to be on the second floor. Fanny and her little boy had the front room because Fanny often brought home one of "the girls" to spend the night or her women friends would run up to her room to take off their hats. Her room was done in bird's-eye maple with pink china silk draperies. Herman and Minnie had the next room. They used the furniture they had bought when they first went to housekeeping, a high maple bed and an old-fashioned dresser to match it. On the walls were enlarged crayon portraits of the old lady and of Grandpa Potter, who had died fifteen years before. Didn't having these pictures show what the family thought of the old lady? The pictures had hung in the living-room until Art descended on the household, a few years before, when they had been removed in favour of two Christy heads, a "Reading from Homer," "The Frieze of the Prophets" and "Two's Company."

The old lady didn't have a hard life. She knew that. She was quite grateful for everything that was done for her. She liked housework, even. Of course, Minnie had rather an annoying way of taking all of the pleasure out of it. Minnie did all of the ordering, all of the planning of meals, the preparing of the salad, when there was a salad, all of the interesting, exciting things connected with the kitchen. But, after all, wasn't it Minnie's house? Hadn't she a right? Grandma knew she had liked do-

ing things in her own home. She didn't blame Minnie but it made things a bit monotonous. Not that things weren't nice, though, a room all to herself, even if the furniture was rather haphazard, lots of time to herself, things to embroider. If Grandpa Potter had lived—but, of course, he wasn't alive, any more than any of the other relatives and friends of those other days were alive, the Scotts, the Howards—Martha.

II

Now it was the old lady's birthday. She thought of it the first thing in the morning when she woke up. She dressed a bit hurriedly as if something were going to happen. She put on a clean morning dress of black and white percale, stiffly starched and, over this, a blue and white checked gingham apron.

She went to the kitchen to straighten things up. There were a lot of dishes for Lu and Phil had brought some boys home after the movies and Fanny had prepared a rarebit for them, using, as is the way of all amateur cooks, quite three times too many dishes.

The old lady had the oatmeal done and the table set, though, when the family came down, one at a time, for breakfast, first Minnie, then her husband, then the boys. Fanny didn't often appear at breakfast.

No one congratulated the old lady on her birthday, though she made a great point of birthdays and they knew it. However, it is easy enough for a family to forget things like that. So, when they were all at the table, making sucking noises over their oatmeal—no one spoke

much at meals at the Potters'—Grandma announced, primly,

"To-day's my birthday."

"So it is," said Herman, and, with an appearance of great gallantry put his napkin on the table, arose and went around to the old lady's place. He kissed her with quite a smack.

"Congratulations and good wishes," he said, which the others echoed. Then,

"How old are you, Ma? Over eighty, I know. Quite an age. I'll never live to see eighty."

"I'm eighty-two," said the old lady.

"Don't think for one minute, Ma, that we forgot your birthday," said Minnie. "You know that we ain't. Only this morning, hurrying about breakfast and all, it slipped my mind. I got something for you two weeks ago at the Ladies' Aid Bazaar. You'd rather have it at supper time, wouldn't you?"

The old lady nodded.

"Yes, I would," she said.

It was the custom of the family to have rather a birthday celebration at the evening meal. They were usually together then and gifts were heaped up at the celebrator's plate and there was a cake.

"You're all going to be home to dinner?" asked Minnie. The men nodded.

When the men left the table, Minnie followed them out into the hall and whispered little warnings to them about "not forgetting something for Grandma" and answering whispers of "can't you do it for me, Ma?"

The day passed as the old lady's days generally passed. In the morning she helped Minnie with the birthday cake. It was a chocolate cake, of which the old lady was not especially fond, but the boys all liked chocolate. There was a white icing on it and they stuck marshmallows on that. The old lady hoped not to get a marshmallow—they stick to your teeth so when you wear a plate. There were to be ten candles on the cake, for ten happened to be the number of candles left over from Elbert's Christmas tree, and you can't possibly put eighty-two candles on a cake, anyhow. The candles were of several colours.

Minnie commented on the beauty of the cake when it was finished. She let the old lady see how good the family was to her. It isn't every old lady of eighty-two who has a birthday cake.

About ten o'clock Fanny and Elbert appeared. The old lady brought their breakfast into the dining-room. Fanny and Minnie were going calling and shopping and were going to take Elbert with them. Usually they left him at home with the old lady. He was rather a spoiled child.

Then Fanny and Minnie dressed. The old lady bathed Elbert, who cried because she got soap into his eyes. This annoyed Fanny.

"For Heaven's sake, Gramma, don't get him cross," she scolded. "We're going to meet Mrs. Herron and Grace for lunch, and I want him to act nice. He'll be in an awful temper if he starts crying."

The old lady didn't say anything. She didn't say any-

thing when Elbert pinched her as she was trying to button his suit. She put on his blue reefer and the cap like a sailor's, and buttoned his leggins, though she did wish he'd sit still while she did the buttons.

At half past eleven the others left and the old lady was alone. She peeled the potatoes for supper and put them in water, she straightened up her room, swept the dining-room, dusted a bit, threw away last night's newspapers.

At half past twelve she went into the kitchen for a bite to eat. She could always "feel when lunch-time came." Minnie usually said, when she went out, "There's always plenty in the ice-box for lunch," and the old lady never contradicted her, though she always felt rather sure that Minnie had made a mistake.

Now, she found a dish of pickles—she did not care for pickles—some eggs and some blackberry jam. She was rather fond of eggs but she was afraid that if she did eat one or two of them, Minnie might say something about "never seem able to keep an egg in the house." Eggs were high, just now. So the old lady buttered two slices of not especially fresh bread rather sparingly and spread a little jam on them. She made herself a cup of tea and ate her lunch sitting at the oilcloth-covered table.

She brushed the crumbs off the table, washed the few dishes, went up to her room for a nap. She liked to sleep, when she had a chance, afternoons.

She woke up, an hour later. A long afternoon stretched in front of her. Still, all of her afternoons were long—mornings—evenings, too. She had heard,

years before, that time would seem to fly by when you get old. It didn't. Still, there couldn't be many more days now—eighty-two.

She put on her best dress of black silk, with cuffs and collar of lace that Helen had sent years before. Helen—she was some one to think about. Helen—Martha's daughter. Helen was young and lovely and had everything. Twice the old lady had gone to visit Helen. She never felt at home with Helen at any time. Helen's maids were trained automatons; Helen's home was full of strange formalities. Helen's days were full of unusual things. Helen herself, perfectly groomed, cool, impersonal, looked eighteen, though she'd been married six years, did not seem like a human being at all.

It was nice of Helen having her old grandmother visit her, the old lady knew that. She never talked much to Helen, never knew what to say, yet she loved her with a strange yearning that she never felt toward any one else—maybe because the others were so jealous of Helen, of everything she did. The old lady didn't especially like to be at Helen's—she was so afraid of doing the wrong things—yet, though she never figured it out, Helen seemed to belong to her, was more a part of her than any of the others could be. Maybe because she was Martha's child. Martha had always been so much more to her than any of the others.

With fingers that trembled a little, the old lady fastened her dress, the dress that was new the last time she visited Helen. She smoothed her hair with the old brush one of the boys had given her. She looked at the things on her dresser, the cover she had embroidered in

violets—they were her favourite flower—the daguerreotype of her and her husband, taken the year they were married, holding hands unashamed. It was coloured, the old lady's cheeks pink and her brooch shining gold. There was a snapshot of Helen on horseback, a stiffly posed picture of little Elbert, a picture of Phil in sailor uniform—he had gone into the navy just before the draft law was put into effect.

The bell rang. The postman!

With quick little steps, the old lady hurried to the door, smiled at the postman as she always did when she took the mail from him and said something about "a cold day," even while she was anxious to close the door so that she could look over the mail. A letter for Herman from an insurance company—a picture post card—a letter in a lavender envelope for Fanny—a post card from Roger—a letter from Kansas City—Morris' wife's writing—yes—she trembled a little—a letter from Helen. She recognized the pale grey envelope, the deeper grey seal. The women Minnie and Fanny went with didn't use grey sealing wax with a crest stamped into it nor grey monogrammed paper—they didn't live in Chicago nor wear lovely pale clothes—didn't do anything the right way.

The old lady put the mail, excepting her post card and two letters, on the hall table, took hers to her room. Morris meant all right—he and his wife—good people in their way—she was glad Morris was doing well—

Helen's letter! She opened it carefully, tearing off the edge in little bits so as not to tear the contents. The old lady got few enough letters. She never knew you

could take a letter-opener to them. She took out the letter. There was an inclosure, but the old lady let that lay in her lap while she read Helen's rather smart writing.

She smiled, read it again, put the letter back into the envelope, looked at the bit of paper on her lap—a cheque —twenty-five dollars.

Helen!

III

The old lady took her work-bag and went down into the living-room. She'd be careful not to get threads around—she knew how Minnie hated that. She was working on a centrepiece, in colours, to be sold at the March sale of the Church Circle. The old lady was glad she could do things like that. Her glasses were of silver and quite bent. The lenses had been fitted for her years before and she had to hold the sewing quite close. She embroidered until it was too dark to see. Then she folded her wrinkled hands in her lap. She didn't believe in "wasting electricity" by turning it on too early.

She sat at the window and thought about things—about Minnie and Herman—how mean Minnie was about little things, about Herman's stupidity and blindness about everything excepting himself. Herman—and the boys, too—never read anything or saw anything they didn't apply to themselves. They were never interested in a single outside thing. All they talked about was what "he said" and how business was going to be. Nothing existed outside of Graniteville. They were so con-

ceited, satisfied. Fanny was just as bad and she whined, too—but she had Elbert. A child is always a little better than nothing. But Helen didn't have any children.

As the old lady grew older the necessity for progeny, so overwhelmingly important in her younger life, had diminished. What difference did it make, anyhow? Elbert, pale and in the sulks, usually—the only one of a fourth generation. Of course the boys might marry and have children. What of it? Of course, if it weren't for Herman, if she hadn't had children, she wouldn't have had a home, might have had to go to the poor-house, maybe. But then, if she hadn't had children, she might have learned a trade and made enough money to get into one of the homes she had read about, where you pay a few thousand dollars and have a nice room and pictures in the evening and company when you like. Still, of course, things couldn't be changed, were all right—there was Helen's letter—

The twilight deepened. The old lady went into the kitchen, turned on a light, put the meat into the oven.

At six Lu came in, then Phil. Then Fanny and Minnie and Elbert. They had gone to call on Mrs. Harden and Elbert had fallen asleep and was cross, now. Fanny was going upstairs to "make herself comfortable," would Gramma undress Elbert?

Fanny put on a pink cotton kimono and went downstairs. The old lady got Elbert to bed, finally. When she got downstairs she saw that Fanny and her mother were busy in the dining-room. She heard the crackle

of paper. Discreetly she stayed in the kitchen. They were preparing her birthday presents.

Dinner was ready. Herman had already come home. Herman liked to eat as soon as he got into the house.

The old lady went into the dining-room. The boys were already seated at the table. Herman sat down. Fanny was putting the potatoes on the table. The old lady found a small pile of bundles at her place, the birthday cake on the table.

"This is very nice," she smiled, "I thank you all even before I look."

She sat down, unassisted. She opened the bundles.

There was a bottle of violet toilet water from Fred. She got that every year. It was not her favourite brand —rather a cheaper kind, in fact, but she liked almost any kind of violet. A pale pink satin pincushion came next. A card was stuck on it with pins. On this was written in Fanny's rather stupid, slanting hand:

"To great-grandmother from her little great-grandson, Elbert Arthur Longham, on her 82nd birthday."

The present from Minnie was a hand-made camisole of rather coarse lace—the old lady never wore camisoles, a fact of which Minnie should have been faintly aware. Well, she could make Minnie "take it back" and wear it herself after a month or so. It was Minnie's size, undoubtedly. There was a pound box of chocolates from Lu. Grandma preferred lemon drops or any hard candies that you can suck and make last a long time, but the family liked chocolates. A boudoir cap from Fanny—a present some one had probably given her for Christmas —and a combination drug-store box of soap, dental cream

and nail polish from Herman completed the gifts. Phil apologized that he'd been busy every minute and he'd "get something to-morrow."

The old lady put the wrapping paper neatly together and put the things on the sideboard next to the cut-glass punch bowl. She sat down again. Minnie, who served, was filling the plates.

"Thanks, everybody, again," said the old lady. "Your things are very nice and very welcome."

She looked at the group, the selfish, complacent faces. She smiled.

"I—I got a card from Roger and—and two other presents," she said, and took the card and letters from the front of her waist.

She passed the card around the table and opened a letter.

"It's from Morris and Ruby," she explained. "They sent me five dollars."

"Not much for a rich man to send his mother," Herman commented. "He hasn't any expenses from you and all he ever does is to send you five dollars a month for spending money. I hear he's doing better every month and that's all—"

"Now, Herman," soothed Minnie. She wanted to hear the letter. Ruby never wrote to her.

The old lady read the letter, about Ruby's cold and the snow storm and Morris' business success. She folded it and put it on the table.

"This one is from Helen, from Chicago," she said. She added "from Chicago," purposely. She knew how Fanny longed to live in a big city.

"Dear Gammy," she read, and added, "Helen always uses that nickname just like when she was a baby."

She knew the family hated nicknames. They thought Gramma a proper pronunciation.

"To think that you're eighty-two," she continued to read. "Quite out of the flapper class, it seems. This is to welcome the New Year and to send bushels of love and good wishes from the two of us. I wish you were spending your birthday with us, but I know the family do all they can to make you happy."

The old lady glanced at them all. She was glad to see they looked a little uncomfortable.

"We've been awfully busy as usual," the old lady read on. "Since Jimmy's been made president of the company he's getting so conceited that he insists on going to horrid business meetings at night sometimes, so, in self-defence, I have to go to dinners with some of my old beaux."

The old lady looked at Fanny and smiled.

"Helen has a good time," she said, "I like to think of a young girl enjoying herself."

Helen was Fanny's age. Fanny had no "old beaux," nor any other kind to take her to dinner. Fanny was unpopular.

The old lady went on reading:

"But Jim gets an occasional afternoon off and that's compensation. We have heaps of fun driving or just trailing around together. Jim's as devoted as ever—I'll say that for him. I'm afraid we'll never quite settle down, even if we have been married a long time."

"Helen's a great girl," said the old lady. "She and

Jim—I never saw a couple like them. She knows how to hold him. I never saw a man so devoted."

The old lady smiled. Fred's wife had eloped with another man. Fanny's husband had "gone out West" and never returned. This would give them something to think about.

"I don't know that I think her husband ought to stand for her going places with other men," said Fanny. "It don't sound right to me. When Helen came down here to visit, when she was seventeen, she was fresh then."

The old lady looked at her.

"Yes. I guess Helen did seem fresh in Graniteville," she agreed. "But Chicago's different. And as most of the folks they go with are millionaires, each owning two or three cars and having boxes at the opera and making a fuss over Helen all the time, I guess her ways are all right up there. I don't blame men wanting to take her places. She's just sweet to every one."

She went on with the letter:

"I don't know what to write that would interest you. We saw Mrs. Blanchard, Mrs. Crowell's mother, at the theatre on Tuesday, and she wanted to be remembered to you. She looked very well. . . . I have a new mink wrap, good-looking. Jim thought it was a Christmas present, but it came the week after so I'm not counting it. It's the only really splurgy thing I've had all winter."

The old lady didn't have to comment. Fanny was wearing her old coat. She'd been begging her brothers and her father for a coat all winter, but they complained about "hard times," as they always did, so she had to make her old seal, bare in spots, do for another year.

"I went to a charity fête last week," the old lady's quavering voice continued, "and wore green chiffon and was symbolic of something or other, but had a good time anyhow. We made nearly eight thousand dollars for the Children's Home."

The old lady knew the church society entertainments in Graniteville. Fanny and Minnie were never important enough, socially, to take part in them, but had to sell tickets as their share.

"I'm enclosing a birthday remembrance. Buy a warm negligée or something else you want. I didn't know what you needed. Let me know if there is anything I can send you. Jim sends a big kiss and a lot of birthday wishes. With love from Helen."

"How much did she send you?" asked Minnie.

The old lady, who was served last, had been handed her plate of food.

"Twenty-five dollars," she answered.

She took the cheque from Helen and the one from Morris, folded them together, made a last gesture.

"Here, you take these, Fanny," she said, "and buy a dress with them. You'll have to have something to wear if you get a chance to go to the Ladies' Aid Ball. With all the things I got and my birthday presents and all, I don't need anything. Anyhow, Helen said to let her know if I did."

It was said so simply that, if the family suspected the old lady, they were silent. Fanny gasped, reached out her hand. She did want a new dress.

"Thanks, Gramma," she said.

IV

The old lady smiled as she ate her dinner. She looked around at the faces. She felt beautifully superior. She knew that, for a moment, their conceit, their satisfaction had been pierced—they had felt something—

The birthday cake was cut and the old lady passed the box of chocolates.

The boys left for a game of pool at the club. Georgina Watson came to get Fanny to go to the movies. Mr. and Mrs. Potter went across the street to play bridge with the Morrises. The old lady promised to go upstairs and look at Elbert who might have caught cold during the afternoon—he had sneezed a couple of times.

The old lady finished the dishes. She read the evening paper. Then she found herself dozing, woke up, dozed again, woke up, put out the living-room light, left one light in the hall, went upstairs. She stopped in Fanny's room to glance at Elbert in his crib. His mouth was slightly open, as always, and he looked pale, but the old lady saw that his condition was not unusual. She went to her room and undressed for bed.

In her high-necked flannel night-gown she stood at her dresser preparatory to putting out the light. She looked at her birthday presents, the cheap violet water, the unwearable camisole and cap, the thoughtless gifts of indifferent people. She looked at her pictures—she and Grandpa when they were first married, Elbert—Helen. Helen—she knew how to write a letter. Why, she couldn't have written a better one if the old lady had told

her what to write. The beaux—the car—the mink coat —the charity fête—the attentive husband—

Her birthday was over. She was eighty-two. Long days ahead—housework—sewing—little quarrels—

She thought of Helen's letter again and chuckled. For just a moment Fanny, Minnie, all of them had looked envious, bitter. Nothing she could ever have done or said could have made them as angry as that letter—and none of them dared say what they thought about it. That letter had opened vistas to them that they could never approach. It had lasted only a minute—but even so . . .

"A pretty good birthday," the old lady said to herself as she put out the light, opened the window, and got into bed.

# CORINNA AND HER MAN

## I

CORINNA had always objected to her mother's attitude toward her father—to the attitude of other women she knew toward their husbands. She spoke frequently to her mother about it, even when she was a young girl.

"Ma," she had said, "I don't see why you slave so over Pa. Your whole life is made up of worrying over him and about him. He doesn't pay any attention except to sort of expect it and take it for granted. You spend hours getting dinner and having it on the table hot, the minute he gets home. He never notices, unless something goes wrong. He just eats. You're always picking out things he likes or that are good for him, and having those instead of what *you* like. First thing in the morning you scurry around the kitchen and make me help, getting breakfast, and you hurry home afternoons to get dinner. You don't dare ask people to the house evenings, like Miss Herron, if he doesn't like them. You treat him so carefully, always trying not to worry him or annoy him—always telling me 'your Pa won't like that,' when I do things. I wouldn't live like you, you bet."

Mrs. Ferguson was a nervous, round little woman, full of quick, meaningless little movements. She had a large, rather flat face, full of small but not disfiguring wrinkles. She had always smiled patiently, at Corinna.

"You don't know your Pa," she'd say, "or men. Men have got to be waited on, got to be treated right. Wait until you're grown up and married—you'll find out. Men have got to have their meals on time and got to have the house the way they want it, neat if they are neat, full of people if they like things lively. You don't know men."

"Huh," Corinna had sneered, "you bet I'll never make a slave of myself for any man. If I ever marry, the man'll do what *I* want. I shan't be always worrying for fear I'm doing the wrong thing."

Yet, looking among her mother's acquaintances and at the parents of her own friends, she noticed the existence of this same state of affairs that so annoyed her in her own family. The man was always being catered to. When he was at home, if at no other time, the house had to move along with an outward smoothness. Little unpleasant things were hidden away. All of the plans of the household were for amusing, entertaining, the man. If he liked to play cards, the cards were brought out immediately after dinner and one game followed another. The man could quarrel with the plays of the others, if he wanted to, grumble at his own ill-luck, at the playing of his partners—it was all accepted with an assumed merriment as part of life. If the man liked to read, his chair, the most comfortable in the house, was drawn up before the best light, and the children, when there were children, had to talk quietly so as not to disturb him.

"The man, the man, always the man," thought Corinna. "Just because he brings home the money. The women pretend to joke about being home on time, about

slaving for him, but they do it just the same. You bet when I'm married things won't be like that. This is a newer generation. It's about time to quit worshipping the man, making such a fuss over him, slaving for him."

Corinna, who was, in her way, thoughtful, somewhat of a philosopher, worried a little over it. She didn't like to think that, in each household, one person—the male head of the house—should govern things so thoroughly, blindly. She didn't believe especially in woman's suffrage, she wasn't interested in voting, she knew women couldn't invent things—at least she knew *she* couldn't; she wasn't interested in science or art, things like that. She just didn't like the idea of being subservient to—cowed by—a man. Why—she knew men.

In spite of her mother, she realized that men weren't superior people, after all. They were rather more stupid than women, on the whole, a bit heavy, with a thick sense of humour. Men were ashamed to show emotions, easy victims to flattery. Of course they were all right to marry. A girl ought to marry. An old maid sort of admits that she can't get a man. Being married gives one a sense of being somebody. Marriage was all right —only married women ought to learn—oughtn't to be such fools, making themselves servants and slaves and an admiring audience, all in one. She wouldn't.

II

Because Corinna's parents were poor, when she finished high school at eighteen, she knew she had to do something to support herself until such time as marriage should relieve her of the necessity of buying her own

clothes and helping at home. She felt that school-teaching required too much training—would be tiresome—and, besides, most teachers became old maids in the end. She didn't want to go into a store. She had no special talent or ambition. So she went to a business college and, after eight months—she was not very clever or quick in learning word-signs—she was able to take a business letter with fair rapidity and transcribe it with some degree of accuracy on the typewriter.

She liked the profession of stenographer. It was decent, dressy. She even looked ahead to becoming some one's private secretary, wearing good clothes and sweeping in, half an hour later than the other stenographers, to an office marked "private," being consulted on numerous business problems—saving the firm money by her wisdom—and maybe marrying the boss in the end.

Her first position lasted two months, her next three. Then she got with a wholesale hardware concern and took dictation a bit more rapidly from the stove buyer, a married man who had four children and who was always worrying about catching cold. She settled down, fairly comfortably, making enough money to wear nice clothes, arriving at the office always a bit late in the morning, always anxious to leave a little before five at night, wasting too much time at noon or in the cloak-room gossipping with the other girls, but, on the whole, as good as the firm expected of her.

Corinna's evenings were spent at dances or the theatre or going to bed at seven to make up for lost sleep. She accepted invitations from any one who asked her—men she met at the office or through girls, old school acquaint-

ances. She didn't care particularly for any of them, but wanted to be with men, especially those who wore good clothes and knew how to treat a girl. She was lively and vivacious, rather a pretty girl in a light, indistinct way, with a nice mouth and a pretty little nose.

This smoothness of days at the office, and of evenings having a good time, continued until Corinna was twenty. Then she fell in love.

She had been waiting, poised, to fall in love for a long time. She had been eagerly looking for love, watching every man she met with a kind of painful eagerness, ready to yield affection at the first opportunity. She met the fellow at a semi-public dance, where she was taken by a boy she had met at business college. The man she fell in love with was named Rodney Cantwell and her escort had known him and had introduced them.

All night, after that first meeting, the name "Rodney, Rodney," went through her mind. Rodney Cantwell! He was quite wonderful, all that a man one loved ought to be. He was tall, with light, rather rough hair, which he brushed back from his forehead in an uneven sweep. His eyes seemed a mysterious blue-grey. He held them half-closed, squinting when he laughed. He danced better than any one Corinna had ever danced with. He asked her to go to a dance with him the following week.

All week Corinna lived in a sort of delirium. She borrowed money from her mother and bought a new evening dress of flimsy pink silk, with no wearing qualities—Corinna usually was rather careful to get durable things. She thought of nothing but Rodney, to the detriment of her dictation and the stove-buyer's temper.

On Saturday night, when Rodney called, she met him with a delicious lump of expectancy in her throat. She learned, suddenly, without experience, a new coquetry. Before this, she had been, with the boys and young men she knew, more or less natural, as natural, that is, as girls ever are with men. There had been a sort of decent companionship. Suddenly, this was changed.

On the way to the dance she found herself talking with a new piquancy, hinting at adventures she had never had, admirers she had never known, a life that was non-existent. She tried to make herself valuable, desirable. She became playful, indifferent. At the dance the music seemed especially fascinating. She hardly spoke to the few people she knew there, preferring to dance every dance with Rodney, letting herself lie, hardly conscious, in his arms as she danced.

At the door of her apartment, as he took her home, he put his arms around her and kissed her. Other men had kissed her, but only after much playful fencing, long acquaintanceship. Now, she yielded to Rodney's kisses in a way she had never done. After he had left her, she lay awake most of the night and spent the rest of it and all of Sunday morning, dreaming of him.

III

Married to Rodney! That would be life! Not the slavery of her mother. Married to Rodney, life would have, constantly, a new meaning. She could coquette with life, play with life—living became suddenly sparkling, many coloured.

Before this, she had not asked for romance. She had

never dreamed of even this much romance. She had just asked that she become not like her mother, a slave to a man who cared nothing for her, for whom she cared nothing. Her mother did not love her father. Other women she knew did not love their husbands. She saw that, now. They tolerated them, because they were being supported. They slaved for them because men wanted slaves. Married to Rodney—love, a full flowering of love—

Rodney did not telephone her for two weeks. She thought of him every day, more than she had ever thought of one person—one thing—in all of her life before. Rodney—she saw his light, thick, rather rough hair, felt his cheek against hers. She thought of him every night after she had got into bed, picturing him in the dark, imagining herself kissing him and being kissed over and over again.

Then, just as she was bewilderingly accepting the fact that perhaps, after all, he did not care for her, Rodney telephoned her and asked her to go to another dance with him—no excuse, no discussion of his two weeks of silence. She accepted him eagerly—and bought another new dress, a thin white one, this time. She must look charming.

The second dance was like the first. Her heart sang when she was with him. She was astonished at herself, at her emotions. She had not thought herself capable of such things. She sneered at her mother even as she felt sorry for her. What did her mother—the other women she knew—know about such feelings—about men like Rodney? They had never even met men like Rodney.

For three weeks, then, Rodney took her to a dance every Saturday night. On a Wednesday he took her to the theatre. And, after each outing there were kisses in the front hall of the apartment. Finally he asked her something—but it was not to marry him.

Corinna was surprised. Then she was furious at Rodney for misunderstanding her, at herself for not being able to yield to him. She went over all of the old platitudes of respectability—what kind of a girl did he think she was? had she led him to think, by word or action, that she would dream of such a thing—how dared he talk to her—even think of her like that?

And Rodney, with a stubborn sort of persistency went over his list of platitudes, too. After all—what harm was there? He liked her all right—would take care of her—she knew that—he would marry her if he could—surely she knew—had known from the first—that he wasn't the marrying kind. She had kissed him, hadn't she—encouraged him—led him on? Other girls . . .

Corinna did not see Rodney any more. He never telephoned her again. She knew where she could reach him, knew where he was employed. But what was there to say to him? She was properly bound with all of the virtues of her class. Kisses were all right. Coquetries were all right. Why, she had even definitely decided to marry Rodney. Of course, her low-cut evening dresses, her little tricks—pressing against him with her bare shoulder, of kissing him, of touching his face with her fingers—these were proper as long as they were baits to matrimony. They were decent then, legitimate. But Rodney had "insulted" her. He had misunderstood her.

As time passed, she definitely decided that she had been mistaken in him, that Rodney had, from the first, been unprincipled, unworthy of her company, that he had led her on—tried to get the best of her, but that, at the first hint of his true feelings toward her, she had sent him from her in great and righteous wrath. She had had a lucky escape.

For months, then, she longed to see Rodney, but she knew what seeing him would mean. She wanted only matrimony. It was respectable, decent, the right thing—to be married. . . . But now it was unthinkable that she should even consider Rodney.

Life became dull-coloured, tinted only by the thought of what she had been through, of her escape—a fascinating, secret thing. She went to dances with the men she had known before, tried to look especially nice, in case Rodney should see her. She carried with her, though, from that time, some of the coquetry that being in love with Rodney had given her. She found that, even though it was artificial now, it added to her popularity.

IV

A year later she fell in love again, a faint echo of what she had felt for Rodney. He was blond, too, but in a faded way, just as her love for him was faded. There were some visits to the theatre—Fred didn't care for dancing—a few parties, his salary was small. Then she found that Fred, too, had definite ideas against matrimony—would not marry until his income was almost twice its present size.

Corinna knew the type—you go with them and go

with them for years and years, and become middle-aged; finally, after every one you know is settled, you either separate and remain single or lapse almost unconsciously into matrimony. Not if she knew herself.

Of course she wouldn't be Fred's slave if she married him. She knew that. But—waiting years and years and then maybe his changing his mind or his salary never growing after all— It was not what you'd call a real opportunity. Corinna's pale love for Fred faded out altogether. She broke an engagement or two, failed to keep a telephone appointment—was surprised to find how little she missed him.

Matrimonial chances did not come in great numbers to Corinna. In fact, during the next two years she did not have a single proposal of marriage nor any chance that might have been twisted into a proposal. Men took her to the theatre or to dances—she was an excellent dancer—told her their troubles, allowed her to be pleasantly entertaining. She coquetted and flirted and giggled—talked to the girls she knew about what a wonderful time she was having and how popular she was. One at a time the other girls she knew married and went to housekeeping in little apartments. She was twenty-four. It worried her, definitely, now, not being married.

Then Arthur Slossen came to work at the woollen factory where Corinna was now employed—she had left the hardware concern several years before and took dictation now from a grandfatherly old fellow who suffered with asthma. Arthur Slossen was not handsome. Corinna had no illusions about that. He was insignificant-looking, rather retiring and had a slight accent,

showing unmistakably that he was foreign-born, a stigma in the set in which Corinna moved.

But, because he was a man and new, Corinna smiled at him and coquetted. She was not surprised when he asked her, three weeks after he entered the office, to go to the theatre with him. He was as unattractive as any man Corinna had ever known. He lacked, alike, all vices and virtues that would have made for interest. He was gentle, even gentlemanly. He was fairly well educated, but, outside of reading the newspapers morning and evening, he had no interest in the printed world. From his evening newspaper he cut out the sermons written by a well-known minister and read from them aloud occasionally. He was kindly and meant well by every one. Altogether, Corinna found him as boring as possible.

But, because he was a man and an escort, Corinna smiled at him, made eyes at him, went through her whole repertoire of tricks. Almost mechanically, she led him on, as she had tried to lead on other men before him.

One night, after she had "gone with" him for about six months, he asked her to marry him. The proposal came almost as a surprise to Corinna. Of course she had definitely played for a proposal—yet she had always played for proposals and had never received them. And here was Arthur Slossen—less of a catch than any man she had ever known—and he had asked her to marry him. To be sure there was really nothing definitely the matter with him. He was fairly nice-looking. He was a little stoop-shouldered, a little indefinite. He had a foreign accent and rather an embarrassed, humble way.

But he was really quite all right. As attractive as her father must have been, or her Uncle Will. After all—a husband. . . . She could stop work in the office—she had never become a real private secretary, after all, and her bosses were always married and paid no attention to her. If she hadn't any chances until now, she wasn't likely to have any after twenty-five—twenty-five is getting on—her complexion wasn't as good as it used to be, her face was becoming broader, flatter, like her mother's.

V

Corinna and Arthur were married in June, and Corinna's friends spoke sentimentally about "the month of brides" and gave her a kitchen shower. The couple went to housekeeping in a four-room apartment and Corinna started in to learn how to cook—she'd never paid much attention to kitchen arts before, being in school, first, and later busy all day in the office.

Corinna now had more time to notice Arthur. And when she looked at him—and looked at the husbands of the other girls she knew—he seemed as desirable as any of them. He had a foreign accent and round shoulders and no sparkle of style—but what were those others? They had other faults just as glaring. But Corinna was glad that at least her generation did not become slaves of their husbands. And, as she rejoiced in this, she presently made a new discovery; she found that she actually despised Arthur. And, despising him, she watched her girl friends, talked with them, and found that all of the other

young married women she knew despised their husbands, too.

She knew, too, why she despised Arthur. It was because of his meekness and his stupidity, his lack of life and excitement—bceause, in marrying him, she had definitely killed any chances of a romantic marriage that might, some day, have come to her. But, more than that. Corinna knew that she despised him—and that other women despised *their* husbands—*because she had been able to marry him.* All other men she had known—Rodney and Fred and the others, a man named Phillips and one named Billy Freer and Jim Henderson—they had, in one way or another, managed to escape her. They had been cleverer than she—and avoided matrimony altogether, or at least with her. It had been a duel, her wits and tricks against theirs—and they had won. Only Arthur had lost, simple Arthur, too stupid to get away. So she despised him because he had allowed himself to be caught—and to be caught by her tricks—old tricks, worn-out tricks, tricks at twenty-five, tricks that had failed to ensnare the others.

Life settled down, monotonously. Because she despised Arthur, Corinna was able to disregard him almost entirely. She would spend whole days, slovenly, in a soiled negligée, washing her face carelessly half an hour before he came home, or allowing it to remain daubed with cold cream, serving delicatessen dinners or cold meats and beans. She had no scruples about cheating him. She was true to him because no pleasant opportunities presented themselves.

Finally, bored at staying home so much, she met men she knew downtown and had luncheon with them or went to the matinée. She even flirted with good-looking men on the street or in hotel lobbies and then had tea. The men were not very interesting nor were the flirtations very exciting—the most desirable men wouldn't notice her and those who did got awfully "fresh"—but it was better than nothing. What if Arthur *did* find out? What could he do? Kick her out? She'd like to see him. What if he did? She hadn't done anything actually bad. She was a married woman, had "Mrs." in front of her name. It wasn't as if she were a poor worm, like her mother had been. She was a good stenographer, could get a position any day, she knew that. Of course it was easier, spending her days in negligée reading magazines or eating candy, or downtown shopping or flirting. It was a lot better, more comfortable, than working. But, if the worst came to the worst, it wouldn't be so awfully bad if she left Arthur. It wasn't as if she couldn't get along. Poor old Arthur—he ought to be glad he had her—who was he to be considered, anyhow?

She thought of Rodney. His proposal no longer seemed insulting now. She remembered Rodney—his wonderful rough blond hair, his narrow grey eyes, his kisses. She was no longer a young girl with a necessary virtue. She was a married woman now, a woman of the world, not a silly little working girl. If she wanted a little affair . . .

She tried to reach Rodney over the telephone. He had left that position years before. No one there knew where he was. She sent a note to him, addressed to his former

home. It was returned to her. Of course, she'd meet him on the street some day. In the meantime . . .

She spent as much money as she could on clothes, as little as possible on the household. Arthur was pretty good about money. He was getting ahead, too. He had two raises the first year of their marriage. Wouldn't it be wonderful if, after all, he made good? She had never thought of that possibility, of his making money. He had been a pitiful way out—a way out of working and the stigma of being unmarried. What if he became something—improved?

VI

When they had been married a year and a half Arthur was promoted to assistant buyer in his department with quite a definite raise in salary. Then, suddenly, for the first time since her marriage, Corinna stopped despising him. He became almost important, some one to notice, to pay attention to. He could and did give her small luxuries far beyond those she would have been able to earn had she still been employed.

Almost unconsciously he took up more of her time. They could not afford a servant, although they were living in a more pretentious apartment—and Arthur, after a long day in the office, often came home tired, out of sorts. He needed cheering up, entertaining. His digestion was not good and he complained of "delicatessen slops," so that Corinna was forced to cook a regular dinner in the evening. She did it a bit grudgingly, but she was a little afraid of Arthur when he complained or when he quarrelled with her. After all, it was his money

that was used to run the house—he deserved a little something from it. . . .

A few months later Corinna's father died and her mother gave up her own small apartment and came to live with Corinna. Arthur liked his mother-in-law, in an indefinite sort of way, and agreed to the arrangement without a word. But, after that, when matters of money for the household came up, he sometimes dared to assert himself, mentioning that, after all, as long as he was paying for the running of the household and was supporting, unaided, both Corinna and her mother, perhaps his opinion might be listened to and his desires fulfilled.

The next year Corinna's daughter was born. Corinna did not especially want a baby. Still, all of her friends were having them. . . . When she knew the baby was coming, she yielded herself deliberately to having it, spending more months than necessary in the house in negligée, ashamed to go on the street on account of her figure. She lay on the couch then, ate huge amounts of chocolates and read sentimental stories in the magazines. After the baby came she did not regain her figure, but retained some of the plumpness which characterized her mother.

There was a maid, now, an ill-trained, slow girl, but, even so, Corinna did not resume the pursuits of her early married life. There were fewer teas with men acquaintances. Perhaps because she was heavier and less entertaining, perhaps because the baby took up much of her time, perhaps because her mother and Arthur seemed to question her more, there seemed fewer chances for "fun." She associated more with women and talked babies and

servants and played bridge. At the end of two years another baby came, Arthur, junior, and before another two years had passed, Corinna's third child, Archie, was born.

Corinna was definitely middle-aged, now, although she felt that she was still young and didn't look her age, nearly. She spent her time with the children mostly, for even with the help of her mother and the one maid, the children were always falling down or crying or needing attention.

There was always a lot to do. When she went downtown, it was usually, definitely, on a shopping trip, with a list of things in her purse that had to be looked after. She wore rather expensive things, a bit flashy, too full of ornament, not very carefully made, sometimes torn where one of the children had pulled, but quite "in style" as to the cut of the skirt and the colour.

Arthur did very well in business. When Beatrice, the oldest child, was twelve, he became buyer for his department. With the years, Arthur had changed a little, too. He was a nervous fellow and, when he was home, he insisted that the children be kept quiet. He was on rather a strict diet, which precluded most good things to eat and did not help his disposition. But he retained his quiet habits and his love of home and did not develop any new desires outside of his business ambitions.

## VII

It was when Beatrice was thirteen that she said something which surprised Corinna.

"Mother," she said, "when I get grown up and mar-

ried, you bet I'm not going to be a slave to a husband, the way you are to Dad."

"The way I am, Bee? How can you talk like that? Your father is the kindest man. Doesn't he give you everything? He never . . ."

"He's good to us, of course," the child persisted. "It isn't that. It's just—you're sort of a slave to him. I guess all women are. You bet I won't be when I'm grown up and married. You were worried all day yesterday for fear Miss Loftus would call last night, because she gets on Father's nerves."

"You know how nervous he is; mustn't be bothered. . . ."

"Oh, I know. Only it doesn't keep you from being a slave. You worry about what he eats—and if he's a little late, coming home from the office—and if company stays too late—and if the matinée lasts too long and he'll be home first—and about his meals and clothes."

"Nonsense," said Corinna, "you don't understand men, dear. They like to have their meals on time, things regular. When you are grown up . . ."

When her daughter had gone away, Corinna looked back a little at her own life, started to think about things, puzzled over things as she had done when she was younger. With the children and all, there had been little time for introspection. She remembered what she had said to her mother, years before. She had believed—all this time—that she had followed her original plan of independence. She—a slave—to a man—as her mother had been—nonsense! Why—Arthur was no one to slave for—Arthur!

She had thought—all these years—indefinitely—that she still looked down on Arthur, did as she pleased. But she knew, finally now, that after the first year or two of matrimony she had never done that. She knew that her daughter was right, as she had been right. All she was living for was peace and quiet, a regular household, the children well, Arthur satisfied.

There had been quarrels, a few years before. But Corinna had found that Arthur hadn't greatly minded quarrelling. There were always quarrels in the office, it seemed. One quarrel more or less, in a day, hadn't mattered to him. But Corinna's day was so tasteless—children, the household—that it was Arthur's coming home that added flavour to her life. Arthur—whom she had so despised! She had wanted peace in the evenings, because evenings were the pleasantest part of the day. She knew now, as she must have recognized subconsciously then, that Arthur was the important thing in her life, that his home-comings were the big events for her.

Now she was fat and thirty-eight and already slightly wrinkled. There was nobody—nothing—she was interested in. The children—her home, of course—but outside of that. She doubted if she could take shorthand notes if she tried. She knew she could no longer operate a typewriter—older women couldn't get positions, anyhow.

She thought of long days of dictation in an office, and shuddered. Arthur made a good living. There were two servants, now, and a good sized apartment and a little place up in the country for the summer. They might even afford a small car next year. Arthur was particular,

of course, a bit cranky, even. He still cared for her, never looked at other women, she knew that. He was not very affectionate, never had been. She had been glad of that, at one time. Now she almost wished he were a bit more demonstrative. But he still spoke of their marriage as a success, of their affair as a "love match." She was glad he felt that way. After all, life was pleasant enough; little household things during the day, shopping, bridge, matinées—Arthur in the evenings. Other women envied her—her home and her children and Arthur. Why, Arthur was nicer than most husbands. She went over in her mind all of the women she knew—all the same—as they had been when she was a little girl—all struggling, working to please the man—the man—

Corinna remembered how strongly she had felt against this when she was a little girl. She knew how her daughter was beginning to feel now. It wasn't fair of course. It didn't seem right—that the man should always come first, that his wishes should come first—that she should spend hours—her days—her life—planning for him, doing things for him—always the man—the man.

Yet Corinna thought of the women she knew who had never married—fearing each day that they'd be too old to be allowed to keep on working—discontented, lonely. She knew that women, like herself, who had accepted matrimony—or who had reached for and found matrimony—were slaves. It wasn't fair. But life wasn't fair to women. You couldn't get out of it—do anything about it. If you weren't married—and didn't have money—you were lonely, worked hard—had a difficult time of it. If you were married—Corinna knew people only in her

own class—you were a slave—as much of a slave as if you had lived hundreds of years ago. Life was not beautiful nor romantic nor lovely. She did not love Arthur—yet, she certainly did not despise him—she really admired him a great deal—getting ahead without pull or anything like that. He worked hard—didn't get much out of life, either, deserved peace and quiet, things the way he wanted them at home. Life was funny, not especially interesting—children—little things. . . . She was a slave, of course—still, life was better than it might be—some one to look forward to seeing in the evenings—to worry about pleasing—to do things for—a man.

# THE END OF ANNA

## I

ANNA CLARK committed suicide. She did it stupidly, with no striving after effects, no dramatic value. Her death seemed as unfinished as her life. At thirty-five, after ten years of an apparently happy enough marriage, early in the afternoon of a calm, clear day, she swallowed a dose of rather unpleasant poison and died before any one found out about it.

The incompleteness of Anna Clark's death lay in her own thoughtlessness. She did not leave even one short note to tell of her reasons. There was nothing well-rounded about the affair. One expects at least a note from a suicide. It is little enough, considering the annoyance the whole thing causes. Hurriedly, hysterically written, left on the dresser to be discovered by the first horrified intruder, a note forms the final, definite thing to talk about. Anna Clark never liked to write. She proved her own incompetence, her inadequacy, her love of avoidance of duties, by neglecting note-writing now. No one ever knew why she chose to escape from a continuance of life as it had come to her.

## II

Anna's younger sister found the body. It was late afternoon. Anna must have taken the poison about one

o'clock, it was proved later. Ruth, as was her wont, came by to get Anna to go for a walk or a call. Ruth, who was married to a clerk in a haberdashery—a well-appearing chap, too, who could criticize your cravats and tell you if your trousers were of a proper cut—lived in an apartment similar to Anna's, though a trifle less expensive. Anna's husband, a city salesman for a spice concern, was doing well and his commissions were far above what they had been at the time of his marriage, almost far enough to make him talk, ambitiously, of a permanent savings account in a year or two.

Ruth usually called for Anna about three o'clock. If it was a nice day, the two women would meet other women of their acquaintance, whom they called "the girls," and, in groups of three or more, would go down-town, spending a pleasant hour or two looking in the shop windows on Fifth Avenue or on the less pretentious, but to them, more accommodating side streets.

Then Anna would go home, stopping in at a neighbourhood combination meat and vegetable market to purchase her supplies for the evening meal, cooking it so that it would be ready just when Fred Clark got in, which was usually about half-past six. Fred did not dress for dinner, but contented himself by washing his hands, hurriedly, as adequate preparation. Fred liked his meals on time.

Sometimes "the girls" spent the afternoons sewing at the home of one of them or calling on more distant acquaintances. They all lived in practically identical apartments, differing only as to a choice of wall paper, of fumed oak or highly polished mahogany for living rooms

and of four-poster or brass beds in the sleeping chambers. Sometimes each "girl" spent the afternoon alone, but this was restricted, usually, to rainy days or days too threatening to venture out. On those days, "the girls" spent their individual afternoons doing their less nice darning and sewing, washing garments too fragile to be trusted to the laundry or making batches of fudge, according to their individual needs and desires.

Ruth had a key to her sister's apartment, an extra key, made for Anna's mother-in-law, who lived in Canton, Ohio, and came up each Spring for a visit. Anna had given it to Ruth a few weeks before so that Ruth might get a package in her absence. So, when her ring failed to bring response, Ruth did not need to summon the janitor in order to gain admission. She thought that perhaps her sister had gone out earlier and left a note for her on the table.

Ruth opened the door with the key, which had lain next to her own in her purse, and went in. The living room was in its usual condition, fairly neat, stiffly arranged, dusty in the corners. The mahogany "set" of three pieces, green velour upholstered, a gift from Fred two Christmases ago, the wicker chair with the broken arm, the oval centre table with its rose-coloured silk shade, which Anna had made with the help of "free instruction" given when you buy materials at one of the department stores, all stood in their accustomed places. In the bedroom, the bird's-eye maple set looked as impudently clean as ever.

In the bath-room, Ruth found Anna. She screamed. Then she went closer and examined the body curiously,

as if Anna were a stranger. Anna was fully dressed. She was wearing her new waist and her tan spats.

Ruth screamed again.

She got out into the hall.

A bill collector for an instalment furniture house was coming out of one of the other apartments and heard her. He went to find the janitor.

In less than five minutes a crowd had gathered. Two policemen were there, questioning every one, writing in small notebooks with thick fingers and stubs of pencils and giving out sullen, inaccurate information.

Ruth gave her name and Anna's and Fred Clark's name and business address and told about finding the body. In half an hour Fred Clark was there, questioning, being questioned, sorrowful, melancholy, yet conscious of his importance.

The funeral was two days later. "The girls" all sent flowers and the spice firm employés sent a large wreath bought from money collected by the bookkeeper, who always did such things. Every one said Anna was well remembered and that it was a nice funeral.

After the funeral, Fred let Anna's two sisters, Ruth and Sophie, and his brother Philip's wife take what they wanted of the household things, and sold the rest to a second-hand dealer, where they brought little enough, and he went to live with Philip, who had a room for him, since his oldest boy had gone West on business.

Ever since she discovered the body, Ruth had tried to find out why Anna committed suicide. It was such a terrible thing to do—the worst thing you could do—just to end things—like that. How Anna must have suffered

there, alone! Yet she never left a note or anything. Ruth couldn't quite understand it. She knew that she never could do away with herself. She was prettier than Anna had been, rather plump and blonde, with little, fine lines around her mouth and light eyes, which had been very blue when she was sixteen.

After a few days, when things began to settle down a little, and Ruth had become accustomed to thinking of Anna as being dead and no longer fell asleep meditating on getting black clothes or the awfulness of finding Anna in the bath-room, she began to reason out for herself why Anna had committed suicide. And, after a while, it came to her and she didn't blame Anna at all. In fact, she wondered why she herself didn't do it.

Anna had committed suicide, of course, because she had been in love. Ruth knew now whom Anna had been in love with. Why hadn't she suspected it sooner? Of course, Anna was in love with Martin, the clerk at the Good Measure Grocery and Meat Market.

It was very plain to Ruth, as she thought about it. She remembered how, when the other girls suggested buying things at grocery departments of downtown department stores, Anna always said; "Oh, let's not do that, and carry all the bundles home on the subway." And, if any one suggested having things sent, Anna always reminded them how long it took for deliveries—days sometimes—and downtown stores never would deliver fresh vegetables and fruits at all. "I like the little stores in my own neighbourhood," Anna would add.

Ruth remembered that Anna had remarked, many times, on the beauty of the clerk Martin's eyelashes.

They were beautiful—long and dark and heavy, and his eyes were an odd shape. Ruth remembered how Anna often lingered with Martin, after the others had given their orders and teased him about things or pretended to scold because she had not been given full measure. And Ruth remembered, too, how Anna always got the pick of everything.

Of course Martin—Ruth never even knew if that was his first or his last name—was the social inferior of their family. No one she knew had ever worked in a grocery store. But, even so, that couldn't keep Anna from being in love with him. Of course, there hadn't been anything between them. Ruth knew that. She had been with her sister every day and knew Anna was absolutely moral and all that, but, no doubt, it was the hopelessness of it—loving Martin and seeing only a glimpse of him every day and maybe even knowing that he didn't love her in return. It was quite too awful. And yet Ruth knew how Anna had felt.

For Ruth was in love too. If Anna had only confided in her, she could have confided in Anna. It just shows how little sisters really know one another.

Of course, Ruth knew that her love was far different from Anna's, far deeper and truer and more lasting. Though, at that, hadn't Anna's love lasted as long as she had? But, of course, there was a difference. For Ruth was in love with no mere grocer's clerk. She was in love with Towers Wellman, her husband's best friend.

Towers Wellman worked at the same haberdasher's shop as her husband even, but there the resemblance ended. For, while Dick was a nice little fellow, quite

loving and attentive, he never quite understood things. His mind was wrapped up in collars and underwear sales. But Towers Wellman was a man of the world. He belonged to a bowling club and a political club and went to stag dinners. He was not married and he made jokes about matrimony.

Ruth knew three women who were hopelessly in love with him. Towers had told Ruth about the women himself. Dick would bring Towers home to dinner and Ruth would spend the whole afternoon preparing things he liked, and, in the evening, the three of them would attend a moving picture show, and, sometimes, before she knew it, when there was a dark scene, Towers would be holding her hand.

Ruth thought of Towers the last thing before she went to sleep at night, visualizing his dark, lean profile, his deep-set eyes, his black, waved hair. No wonder women, rich women, were in love with him. And yet, Ruth felt that he loved her alone. Frequently, half in fun, he had told how he had broken an important social engagement to come to dinner, but Ruth knew that the look he gave her had a double meaning, for he *had* come to dinner, and there wasn't a reason in the world why some rich woman hadn't invited him first.

So—Anna had been in love too! And she had felt so badly over it that she had taken poison! Maybe the affair had gone further than Ruth suspected! Yet, how could it? Wasn't Fred home every evening and hadn't she seen Anna every day?

Ruth almost wished that she had the courage to kill herself, or something. It was mighty hard, living with

one man and loving another one. And spending the days chatting about other things, never talking about what you want to talk about or getting near the one you care for. Never daring to tell any one about things! Maybe, if she and Anna had confided in each other. . . . But, it was too late for that now. Anna had loved and found it hopeless, and gone out.

Ruth knew her love was hopeless, too. For, though she loved Towers and felt that he loved her, she knew that he was too little to take her away with him. She loved him none the less for his prudence, for she was rather a coward and hated scandals and things like that herself. Anna's suicide was bad enough. The family would never quite recover from it. Oh, well, life was pretty messy after all. Here she had to keep on, day after day, and Towers was the only one she cared for. Nothing else, no one else mattered. If only Towers and she could go away some place, away from every one and be happy together! And she never could do that, she knew. After all, hadn't Anna done the wiser thing?

III

Sophie missed her younger sister a great deal. The girls were orphans, their mother had died when Sophie was fourteen and their father three years later, and Sophie, though just a few years older, had really raised Anna.

The last year Sophie didn't see Ruth and Anna frequently, for Sophie had four children and children take time. Sophie's husband was a union tailor and was on strike a great deal and she couldn't dress well or have

things as nice as the two younger girls. Not that she envied them, only—well, there wasn't much use feeling bad by trying to go with them anyhow. They had their own crowd and were younger and smarter and different. But fine girls, of course.

Sophie thought about Anna as she mended always-torn blouses and washed always-dirty dishes. Why had Anna done such a thing? After all the time she had spent raising her! It seemed as if Anna were only a little girl, instead of a woman of thirty-five. But even thirty-five is young when one has a lot to live for. Didn't Anna have? Sophie had always thought of her two younger sisters as rather happy and fortunate. Surely, Anna had always seemed happy. And yet . . .

What had made Anna hate the world enough to want to get out of it? She had a nice home, nicer than Sophie would ever have. There surely were no debts. Certainly they got along well enough together, Anna and Fred.

But did they?

People thought that she and Steve got along all right too. You can keep people from finding out things like that, if you're careful. Hadn't she done it? For years and years? And she probably would keep on, until the kids were grown up and then—oh, how could she get along any other way? It was more than a habit.

Still, Fred didn't drink. At least, at first, Sophie was pretty certain he didn't. You couldn't be too sure. People didn't all know about Steve.

Though Steve was working, now, Sophie shuddered and walked quietly, as if he were asleep in the next room.

For Steve got paid on Saturday, when he "worked steady," and on Saturday night he came in, his pay envelope pitifully depleted, smelling horribly of cheap whisky, and cursing. She'd pray the children wouldn't hear and she'd get him to bed.

In the morning he'd be sick and lay there saying things he shouldn't, though usually he'd be up and able to work on Monday. It wasn't that Steve drank more than most men. It was just that he was the sort that shouldn't drink at all. Even the doctor said he had a delicate stomach and couldn't stand it. But he did drink, though not so terribly often like some men.

But even when Steve didn't drink, things weren't so much better. He had a mean disposition, the kind that can take an innocent phrase and boomerang it into a sneer. He was never quite satisfied about things, about his home, about his children. He hated the Government and joined various political societies, getting into fights with the neighbourhood leaders and hating them in turn. Steve wouldn't read several of the newspapers, because he "had it in for them" and their policies. He disliked Sophie's friends and her relatives, and quarrelled because he had to spend the evening with them occasionally. He called Dick a "damned white-collared little snob" and Fred was a "sick roach who hadn't the liver to have a will of his own." Steve was not a pleasant person to live with.

Thinking over her life since her marriage and the life of Anna, since her marriage, as she knew it, little things came to Sophie which showed her that Fred was not all that Anna tried to picture him. She saw, now, clearly

enough, that Anna had been brave, that she had tried to conceal Fred's failings, but that, underneath, she hated him for his cruelty to her. Little things that Anna had said proved this. It could be nothing else.

Why hadn't Anna left Fred? Sophie felt that she would have left Steve years ago, if it hadn't been for the kids. Anna could have left—any day. Only herself to look out for and she had been a cashier before her marriage and could have always made a living. Still, maybe she did think of that way—and decided against it. Sophie felt that there was something noble, something brave, about what Anna had done. She wished she could do it. She wished it on Saturday nights, when Steve was drinking and on many other nights when he wasn't. There wasn't very much use in living, most of the time.

And yet—the kids. They were sweet. They had mean tempers sometimes, especially little Steve, who could be really bad. But then, again, sometimes when they were in bed, they'd let her put her arms around them, tight, some nights, and kiss her in return, too. They were sweet, the kids, and worth a lot of hard things.

But Anna hadn't any kids. Not a one. If the baby hadn't died, maybe she could have stood it, too. Still, what is the use of it all? You can't tell how kids'll turn out, even if you spend years sewing and cooking and cleaning for them. It's taking a chance. And the other things . . . it's best to get away from them.

Anna, without any one but Fred, and he mean to her and she trying to conceal it with smiles and jokes and changing the subject . . . she had been brave. And one

person can't stand everything. And, looking ahead and seeing nothing but years of Fred and bad treatment or of working to try to make a living, maybe, after all, Anna had figured it out that her way was best. Fred had said they hadn't quarrelled. But then, Sophie never did trust Fred too much from the first. Of course, he'd have said that. They had probably had an awful quarrel the night before, and rather than go through with it all again . . .

Well, Anna was dead. It must be good to simply quit and stop quarrelling and working. If she had Anna's chance to go out, without harming any one else, without leaving any kids for maybe worse treatment . . . Sophie knew, in her heart, why Anna had committed suicide, and though she shed many tears over her sister, understanding things as she did, she couldn't blame her. Maybe Anna had picked out the right path.

IV

After his wife's death, Fred Clark went to live with his brother Philip and Phil's wife, Myrtle. Fred missed his wife a great deal, especially during the first few months after her death. A companionship of ten years—and as close a companionship as a married couple, living together in a city apartment, without children, are bound to have, is not easily forgotten.

But, in a few months, Fred grew accustomed to life at Phil's house, which was not much different from his old life. It was the same social stratum. Fred enjoyed the company of his two little nephews and liked to bring small presents home to them when he came in early on Saturday afternoon. He got along quite well

with Myrtle, a pleasant-faced pale woman, who was glad of the extra money that Fred paid into the housekeeping fund.

Fred's share of the expenses, as proportioned by Phil, was much less than he had ever paid for the upkeep of his own apartment and he was able to begin saving money immediately after the funeral expenses were paid.

Often, when he was alone in his room, Fred thought of Anna and of her death.

At first he had been too startled, too numbed into silence to think that there had to be a reason for her suicide. It had seemed more like an accidental death, something that had taken Anna unawares as it had taken him. He and Anna had shared so many of their sensations that it seemed hard for Fred to believe that Anna had done this thing herself.

But, gradually, the unreality of the situation wore away and Fred came to know that Anna was really dead—and by her own hand. And, as he realized that she had killed herself, at the same time came the realization of the motive for it, the only possible motive. Anna had killed herself because she was poor! It had been under the burden of a continued poverty that must have eaten into her spirit as he had often felt it eat into his, that Anna had decided not to live any more. Anna had never said anything to Fred about it. He was surprised, now, that she never had—for he thought that she had told him everything. And yet, he had felt the same thing so often himself that he was not surprised to find that Anna had felt it and that it had been too much for her.

They had never really experienced the pangs of poverty,

it is true. Fred felt that it would have been easier to bear if they had. He had always "done well," in that he had made a living. Each month, by hurrying around to dozens of little, retail groceries, he had sold enough spices to maintain his simple household.

But each month there had been the fear that, perhaps, there wouldn't be enough for the month to come.

Each month some household article had advanced in price and had to be purchased less frequently or not at all. If he and Anna went to the theatre—balcony seats—there could be no other luxuries that week or the week that followed. Even a guest in to dinner—and the Clarks had little company—made a difference in the household money. New shoes were to be talked over, several weeks ahead, at the dinner table. A new suit meant that they had to start saving for it a month or two in advance, and, if one made a mistake and bought the wrong suit, which happened quite often enough, the suit had to be worn just the same, throughout the season. Fred had to look neat all the time. And Anna had a certain position to uphold too. She had to prove to "the girls" and to the rest of her small world, that she was the wife of a prosperous city salesman.

Anna was not extravagant. Fred knew that. He could picture her, brow-knitted, looking over small household bills, trying to find which could be reduced without radically altering a fairly comfortable manner of living. Anna cleaned her own gloves and her own thin waists. Outside of a few ice cream soda "treats" for "the girls" she spent little money foolishly.

Fred knew that Anna had always been a true wife to

him. He knew that he was the only man she had ever cared about and that she had cared for him sincerely and devotedly. He knew that there could have been no other trouble. He knew only too well why Anna died.

Fred had felt like that—himself. He and Anna must have lain on the same bird's-eye maple bed and thought the same things about living. Only, Anna had ended it and he had kept on.

He hadn't wanted Anna to work. He didn't believe that married women ought to have positions. A woman's place is in the home, he always maintained, and a position for Anna, as a possible way out of their poverty, had never entered his mind.

But, how often he had wished for money, for some of the smaller, cheaper luxuries! He had often gone to sleep wondering how many years more he could keep up the strain of spice-selling, the constant hammering of it, the continued striving to make a living. Always, in the end, he felt himself beaten, saw himself, before he had reached old age, being overtaken by real poverty, finding that he was unable to sell enough spices to support himself and Anna. There was nothing else he could do as well. He knew that. Selling, selling, day after day, just for the privilege of living in a little, stuffy apartment and never enough left over to put some by. No wonder the outlook had been too much for Anna. He hadn't known that she had felt deeply about it—or cared. And she had cared, so very much.

Now that Anna was dead, things were different. Fred wondered if Anna ever looked down from Up There and

saw that her sacrifice had not been in vain. The burden of supporting two was lifted. He paid Myrtle each week, bought little things for the boys and little extras for himself that he never could have afforded before—a more expensive brand of cigarette, a new cane, some collars of an odd shape, and each week he put a little money into a savings account.

Fred felt years younger. He was preparing for old age. There was something to look ahead to. But—to have kept on the other way . . . trudging always to a poorer future. . . . It had looked mighty black. Too black, sometimes. Fred had considered, often enough, the very thing that Anna had done. He had been insured for three thousand dollars, in her name, and he felt that her sisters would both rather look out for her—they had good homes—and she could have stayed with them and gone to work at an easy job, if necessary. It seemed such a cowardly thing to do—to step from under, and he had never quite got to it, after all. And now—he was free.

But Anna—wasn't she free, too? Hadn't she taken the way out, as she saw it, a way that meant no more scraping and saving, no more using up of left-overs, of planning for new bargain shoes three weeks before the soles ran through the old ones? It was sad enough, losing Anna, but when he thought it over, Fred understood perfectly. It was the simplest solution. He didn't blame Anna at all. Compared to living on, doing without nice things, planning to keep on doing without them, and with the strain drawing tighter and tighter, Anna had certainly chosen the better way.

V

On the morning that she committed suicide, Anna Clark waked up at seven. The round nickeled clock on the bird's-eye maple dresser awoke her as usual. She yawned and stretched her arms above her head as she did every morning. Then she nudged Fred, sleeping rather noisily with his mouth not quite tightly closed, as he always slept. Then, as she never missed doing, Anna got up and shut off the alarm, went into the bathroom, hung up the towels that Fred had thrown on the floor the night before, and took a hurried bath. She put on her "morning clothes" that hung in the disorderly, tightly-crowded closet. They differed from her "best clothes" in that the cheap lace edging of the underthings was badly worn and that, instead of a dark skirt and a georgette waist—her usual afternoon outfit—Anna wore a checked gingham dress. Anna had three morning dresses. Two were blue and white and one pink and white. The pink and white one was slightly faded. By wearing aprons over them, when she cooked, one dress looked plenty clean enough to wear mornings, and when she got dinner, for a whole week.

After she had bathed, Anna went back into the bedroom to dress and again waked Fred, who always fell asleep after the first waking. This time, Anna talked to him about what had happened to both of them the day before. She had been with Ruth to call on Mrs. Ambier, an old friend, who had just had her third baby at a neighbourhood hospital.

"She doesn't look strong," Anna said. "She ought not to have any more children."

Fred didn't remember whether or not Mrs. Ambier had looked strong the last time he had seen her—for several months, Mrs. Ambier had not performed her accustomed social duties—but agreed that, if she looked badly, there should be no more children.

Fred told Anna about old Klingman, one of his regular customers, and how he made him taste the pickled herring and other Klingman-prepared specialties.

"He's quite a character," Fred added.

While Fred shaved, Anna got breakfast. It was the usual breakfast. There was half of a large orange for each. When oranges were smaller, Fred and Anna each had a whole one, but grapefruit and large oranges were always divided. Then there was oatmeal, cooked the night before and left standing, wrapped in a towel, on the radiator all night. It's just as good that way, Anna always told her friends, as if prepared in a fireless cooker —and a great deal less trouble. There were two soft-boiled eggs apiece—on alternate mornings the eggs were scrambled—but to-day was the day to soft-boil them.

Some mornings there was toast, but this morning the bread was soft enough to be eaten without toasting—and coffee. Before putting the eggs in water Anna went to see how far Fred had progressed with his dressing. He was putting his shirt on, which meant that Anna would have to hurry things a little—as she always did towards the end.

Breakfast was at eight-thirty. Before sitting down, Fred got the paper, which the boy had left at the door, and read it as he ate. He was not too absorbed in the

news to listen to what Anna had to say nor pass morsels of the last twelve hours' happenings to her.

After eating, Fred looked at his watch, a $2.50 Ingersoll, which kept just as good time for him as a gold one that he had had given to him when he was twenty-one, and found that he was a trifle late. He tried to be at the office at nine-thirty, starting from there on his rounds of spice-selling, after dictating a few business letters and handing in reports that he had not attended to the night before.

As usual, Fred was a trifle late. He folded his paper irregularly and thrust it into his overcoat pocket. It was early in the fall and slightly cool. He kissed Anna goodbye a bit hurriedly, as usual, but he remembered later that the kiss she gave him in response was no warmer, no colder, for that matter, than the kiss she usually gave him. It was the last time Fred saw Anna alive.

After Fred left, Anna gathered together the breakfast dishes and washed them in the sink, without a dishpan. She preferred this method because it was quicker. The water was not very warm. It scarcely ever was warm enough to wash dishes properly and she frequently spoke to the janitor about it. With the use of a cleaning powder, she got the dishes fairly clean and dried them slowly.

After putting the dishes away, Anna made the one bed. Then, with a carpet sweeper which needed oiling and squeaked badly she went over the brightly coloured rugs in the living and dining-rooms. She did the bedroom on alternate days. She dusted the furniture with an irregularly shaped piece of cloth, the tail of one of Fred's old shirts.

A package she had ordered the day before came up the dumbwaiter. Anna opened it. It was a bargain shirtwaist and she noticed that one of the sleeves was sewed in crooked. She took it into the bedroom, glanced at the clock and saw that it was nearly ten-thirty.

Anna tried on the shirtwaist. It fitted well enough, except where the sleeve was wrong. She could wear it that afternoon and fix it—in half an hour—some other time. The collar was rather nice.

She picked up a woman's magazine—she had subscribed to it and two more a few months before, "to help a boy through college"—and read two stories in it. The second story was quite pathetic and she wiped her eyes at the ending.

She looked over the back of the magazine at the cooking recipes and found a simple recipe for spice cakes with one egg. She found she had all the ingredients in the house and Fred and she both liked spice cakes. She went back into the kitchen, propped the magazine against the built-in cabinet, using a yellow mixing bowl, and made the cakes, following the recipe carefully, humming a little to herself as she cooked. Anna was not especially fond of cooking. She had been housekeeping for ten years.

While the little cakes were baking—she had poured the batter into muffin tins—she read some more of the magazine. When the cakes were done, she spread them on a clean towel, and, as soon as they were cool enough, bit into one. It was quite good. If the cakes had failed, those who wondered about her suicide might have found the spice cakes and considered them as a motive. But

the cakes were so good Anna ate two of them. She put the others into the cake box along with a stale piece of baker's cake, left over from three days before, gathered up the crumbs, washed the dishes her baking had soiled and went into the bedroom. It was eleven-fifteen.

She washed and started to change into her "afternoon clothes," choosing the new waist that Ruth found her in. The 'phone rang just before she finished dressing. It was Marie Cluens, one of "the girls," asking her to come over in the afternoon. Marie was expecting a few other callers. Anna said that Ruth was coming for her and if Ruth had made no other plans she'd be glad to go.

She was all dressed, and looking at herself in the bird's-eye maple dresser mirror. She approved of her looks, for, at thirty-five, it was quite all right to have a few wrinkles and a sprinkling of grey hair. Most women of thirty-five looked older.

Then Anna remembered that she had neglected to put on her spats. She had bought some tan ones, a few weeks before, while shopping with Ruth, who had bought grey. Spats are awkward things to button, after one is dressed, when one hasn't a maid, and Anna had taken on a few extra pounds recently. She finally managed to button them. Then, suddenly, button-hook still in her hand, after she had finished buttoning her spats, Anna sat upright on the bird's-eye maple chair and thought, for the first time in months, about herself.

Here she was—buttoning spats! She hated to button them. What a bore, what a terrible bore it was, to button them! And, to-night, she would have to unbutton them, and to-morrow afternoon, she would have to take

the spots out of them, if there were any spots, and button them again.

And it wasn't only spats. Of course she didn't have to wear spats. It was the other things. Anna thought of all of the other pieces of clothes she wore, her vest, copied after its more expensive Italian silk sisters, her "Teddy-bears," the delicate and modest name "the girls" had taken to calling their combinations, then corsets, stockings, camisole, skirt—every garment requiring buttoning or fastening or tying or pinning. Each one had to be pulled in place or puffed or tied. And, in the evening, each one had to be taken off again.

Anna thought of how, each morning, she had to go through the same process of bathing and putting on a number of things. Then, she had to get breakfast and wash the dishes. Then she had to clean and do some washing, usually those same underneaths, and then dress again. And then go out and then come home and cook dinner—and eat it—and then wash more dishes and then spend an evening at something tiresome—and then undress again. Life stretched out before Anna—a void of little things—punctuated only by dressing and undressing.

The worst of it was, after she was dressed, there was nothing to do. There is some object in dressing if one has an appointment, a little secret meeting, a half hour's flirtation, a dinner, the meeting of new people, adventure, anything. Then, indeed, may one dress without heeding the buttons. But Anna knew that there were no surprises in her day—that there never could be—that nothing could come that would be pleasurable enough to make up for the thousand unbuttonings.

Sitting there, button-hook held in her right hand, Anna went over her life as it drifted back to her. First, years of school, slow, stupid years, of little quarrels with playmates, little misunderstandings with her teachers, lessons at night at a round table, with Sophie and Ruth; occasionally, very dull parties on Friday evenings. Then, the death of her parents. Then, school days were over and the dull years stretched into long days of working and long evenings with "the boys" and "the girls." "The boys" were the masculine set, who, attracted by "the girls," took them to possible social diversions. Fred had been one of "the boys." Three years of a dull monotone of a courtship and she and Fred were married and the years had gone on—and she had dressed each morning for a day of colourless calm and undressed in the evening to get rest for another.

All things had come to Anna, and yet nothing had come. School, courtship, marriage, and then, after two years, a baby, a sickly, crying boy baby, who had taken all of her time from useless things to the doing of little, constantly repeated things for him. And then, after a year of the baby, he had died and she and Fred had decided that they did not want another. Mourning, then, calm, placid. And then two years of absolute blankness.

Then, Anna had had an admirer. It had seemed the one experience that her grey life had missed, the one thing that might have had some significance. Her admirer had been the family dentist, a ruddy young fellow, getting bald too young. In the unpicturesque pose of being open-mouthed in a dentist chair she had fallen in love with him and he had seemingly reciprocated her affection.

Anna's passion had been brief, shallow. There had been a number of pseudo-appointments, which had been given over to love-making.

Then the dentist, his first name was Harvey, had called during the mornings, when Anna knew "the girls" weren't likely to come in. Harvey had stayed for lunch, and, as that was the one meal of the day which Anna did not usually have to prepare, she rebelled at having to cook it for her lover, who had a large appetite. After only the smallest glimmer of pleasurable excitement, Harvey had dimmed into the monotony of her regular life, his visits, the lunches with him, the fear of being discovered with her lover gradually blotched into the background.

And, as unexcitedly as he had drifted in, Harvey, perhaps finding Anna as monotonous as she found him, perhaps because a prettier patient appeared, drifted out.

Anna did not grieve for him. Occasionally she shuddered at the thought of what might have happened if Fred or Ruth had discovered the affair, but even the shudders grew to lack distinction.

After Harvey, Anna had had no more lovers. Now, thinking about it, Anna found that she had not talked, seriously, to a man alone, for over three years. There was no one she was interested in, no one she knew or cared to know whom being alone with was worth the effort of planning for it. She knew so few men. There was a stupid grocer's clerk with long lashes, a drug clerk who simpered at her and a friend of Fred's, who held her hand when he told her good-night—and they all lacked sex interest.

Anna knew that Ruth was having a silly affair with a

friend of Dick's, but it didn't bother her. It didn't interest her enough to make her wish that Ruth would get confidential about it. She had had her affair. She knew what a bore affairs were.

Anna had hoped, when she was younger, that she might have a real lover, a great passion, but, as the years passed, and she saw her youth slipping away, saw that her social position was not one to attract men and that she had no special gift of attraction, anyhow, she almost forgot about it.

She thought of Fred, pleasantly. Fred was good, awfully good and awfully, awfully tiresome. There hadn't been a surprise in anything that Fred had done in five years. Anna knew that he never could do anything but calm, expected things. Fred had always been kind to her. How different from Sophie's husband, who was such a terror. Poor Sophie! She tried so hard, always, to conceal things. Well, there was nothing she could do to help her, so she had never spoken to Sophie about it, let her believe that no one knew what a brute Steve was. Anna knew she wouldn't have stood him a week.

Anna thought of other things, of money. She knew Fred worried quite a lot about it. She would have liked to have money, too, of course, but, as long as Fred made a good living, and she felt that he always would do that, the question of finances did not greatly concern her. She would have liked to have been rich, but, after all, they were poor people and she had been brought up modestly.

She still sat, button-hook in hand. And she looked at the button-hook—and at her spats—and thought of the thousands of other buttons that would have to be attended

to, on thousands of succeeding days. What was the use of it all, anyhow? Why keep on? Why bother? She really wasn't interested in living, in anything. Why, there was a way out, a way that meant no buttons at all!

Anna felt, suddenly, that she couldn't stand it another day. The years that stretched out—the years of getting old, monotonously, of hundreds of calls on and from "the girls," thousands of moving pictures with Fred, thousands of dishes, thousands of—buttons. She couldn't stand it! Anything else!

She threw the button-hook on the floor. It hit the mahogany door, which she rubbed down so carefully, every week, so it would retain its shine. And Anna smiled. She could get out of polishing that door! It had never occurred to her before. It had never entered her mind that she washed the dishes and talked to Fred and buttoned and unbuttoned because she wanted to—because she chose that way. There was another way, after all, a way that might hold something else or nothing else at the end, but that, at least, would end, for always, the things that kept on, unbearable, now.

She went into the bathroom. From the top shelf of the medicine chest she took a large blue bottle. On the label it was marked "Poison" in large, black letters. It was an excellent germicide.

Anna tasted it. It rather burnt her lips a little and was decidedly unpleasant. But—after all—it would taste unpleasant for only a few minutes. And then it would all be over—everything would be over.

It seemed a miracle that things could be ended thus, slightly. One drink and dirty dishes, bedmaking, dress-

ing and undressing would cease to be. Fred would cease to be—for her. There would be no need of trying to appear interested when he was talking to her, of trying to say things that would interest him. No dinners to plan or cook. Nothing to have to waste time over! No time that needed wasting! And she had never thought of it before! Anna looked at her tan spats. They were buttoned—and would stay that way—until some other hands than hers unbuttoned them. If it hadn't been for the spats, now, for that last straw of additional buttons. . . .

Anna poured the poison into a glass—she never liked to drink things out of a bottle—and tasted it again. Then she remembered what she was doing, and smiled. It seemed unbelievable that there could be such an easy solution. She drank the glassful.

Ruth, coming in, later in the afternoon, with the extra key, found her.

## A NOTE ON THE TYPE IN WHICH THIS BOOK IS SET

*This book is composed on the Linotype in Old Style No. 7. This face is largely based on a series originally cut by the Bruce Foundry in the early seventies and that in its turn appears to have followed, in all essentials, the details of a face designed and cut, some years before, by the celebrated Edinburgh type founders, Miller and Richard. It has always been a popular and satisfactory face for book work because while it is compactly designed, so that a large number of words appear on a page, its compactness is not accompanied by any loss in legibility. Old Style No. 7, composed in a page gives a subdued color and even texture which makes it easily and comfortably read.*

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W7-CJR-031